

EDWARD S WOODS

Bishop of Lichfield

EVERY-DAY RELIGION

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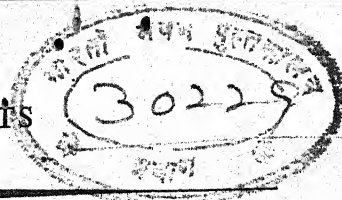
TO
MY DEAREST AND BEST
WHO IN THE INTIMACIES OF FAMILY LIFE
HAVE HELPED ME TO UNDERSTAND
THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF
'EVERY-DAY' RELIGION

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Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see;
And what I do in anything
To do it as for Thee.

A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye;
Or if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heaven espy.

All may of Thee partake;
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with this tincture, "for Thy sake,"
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told.

GEORGE HERBERT

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PREFACE TO THE SEVENTH EDITION

Revised and largely Re-written

THE original edition of this book was published in 1922; the sixth edition, revised, in 1933. My friend, Dr. Hugh Martin, of the Student Christian Movement Press—I owe much to his help and encouragement in the writing of books—tells me there is still a demand for the book, and has long urged a re-issue and a re-writing. This at last I have accomplished in the intervals of a life not exactly unoccupied. Much of a book written a quarter of a century ago naturally “dates” now; so a great deal of revision, and for some chapters complete re-writing, has proved necessary. I have added a new chapter on “Christianity and Politics.”

Grateful acknowledgment is made of permission to make use of copyright material from Messrs. Blackwood & Sons for the quotation from *Stradivarius*; to Messrs. Macmillan for the poem by Mr. Blackwood; and to the executors of the late George Macdonald.

My debt to other men's thoughts and words and writings I cannot calculate or express. This book is not so much an “original” work as a passing on of what has been assimilated from many sources in the course of a good many years. I dare to hope that for a few readers these chapters may open windows on to Reality.

EDWARD LICHFIELD

THE PALACE,
LICHFIELD,
St. Paul's Day, 1947.

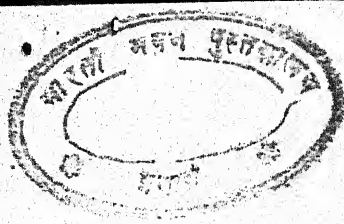
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I



Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. ST. MATTHEW vii, 21.

Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. COLOSSIANS iii, 17.

It is the glory of religion not to be set apart from life, but to permeate it powerfully. H. C. KING

Christianity is the projection into the world of the lines along which Christ lived. It is a duplicating in modern life of the spirit, the method, and the aims of Jesus, a following through the world the very footprints that He left behind.

HENRY DRUMMOND

The long history of European Christianity, if it ever comes to be written, will be the history of a submerged and hidden movement—the tracing of the course of a pure but tenuous stream of living water which has refreshed the souls of innumerable men and women who have penetrated to its secret recesses, but has but seldom emerged into the open, to flow through the broad and dusty cities where the world's main activities are carried on. A. E. ZIMMERN

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,
Grant us the strength to labour as we know,
Grant us the purpose, ribb'd and edged with steel,
To strike the blow.

Knowledge we ask not—knowledge Thou hast lent,
But, Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need;
Give me to build above the deep intent

The deed, the deed.

JOHN DRINKWATER

Faith is not belief in spite of evidence, but life in scorn of consequence. ANON.

INTRODUCTORY: CHRISTIANITY A
WAY OF LIVING

A T a little town in Belgium, some weeks after the end of the first world war, I happened to be present at a gathering of officers who had come together to listen to an address by a distinguished Army Chaplain. Some seventy turned up, and the Chaplain accomplished what seemed to me the remarkable feat of holding them spellbound for more than an hour while he expounded Christianity in his own vigorous, picturesque and inimitable style. Among other things he spoke of the evolution of the Padre during the war, and the significance of that evolution. In the early days, he said, at Mons and Ypres and elsewhere the Padre's presence at the front had always occasioned a certain surprise; men in the combatant units could not quite make out what he was doing there, unless it were to bury the dead. Only gradually did it dawn on men's minds that a parson's work has to do quite as much with living as with dying.

In the second world war the Padre, quite rightly, came into his own; wherever the men went, he went, sharing all hardships and all dangers, a fact which for many men has altered their whole conception of religion.

But the old idea, illustrated by the out-of-date conception of the Padre as a kind of glorified undertaker, dies hard; and there is always a tendency for religion to "fall into a rut of irrelevance to life." * Indeed the chief task for Christians in every generation is to get religion back again from life's circumference to its centre, to experience and to demonstrate its entire relevance to all the concerns and activities of human beings. The task can never be an easy

one, for just as the Churches are prone to imprison the Christ in creeds and stained-glass windows, so there is in every man who is at all religious a queer instinct to rail off a department of his life and call it religion. Within that circle are dumped all manner of things which are supposed to belong there: church-going, pious reading, meetings, missions, parsons, charities, and the general paraphernalia of organized religion. But all the while the real business of life is carried on on the other side of the fence. All the thousand details of engrossing daily work, all the personal relationships involved, all that goes on in the world around, life's interests and pleasures and recreations, its richness and colour, its gaiety and fun and laughter, its gifts and surprises, its comedies and tragedies—these are the things which form the real stuff of human living, and for too many people they have next to nothing to do with religion. Whereas to be a Christian is to find and practise a religion which is not above or aloof from these things, but is woven in with them, and so woven with them as to determine their pattern. Jesus Christ quite clearly was, and is, concerned with life in all its fullness;¹ and any religion which is "professional" and aloof and unrelated to life ought never to be called after His name. He came to show men a faith which should touch life at every point; His "Incarnation" can hardly mean less than that God Himself is concerned with everything human.

By His words and deeds Christ made it perfectly plain that God's love and power are to operate here and now, on this earth; though the extent of their successful operation is necessarily to a large extent conditioned by man's faith and his willingness to co-operate with God's goodness. Of course Christianity is relevant to the whole of life. If by politics we mean the plans and principles by which society organizes itself, and if by economics we mean the way in

¹ Cf. Col. ii. *10: "It is in Him that you reach your full life" (Moffatt's translation).

which it produces and consumes the things which it needs, then obviously these things are the concern of any religion which purports to give direction for all human living. You cannot chop up human life or personality into water-tight compartments or divisions. John Smith may be a church-goer, but he is also, and at the same time, a husband, a father, a tax-payer, a voter, a shopkeeper, a manager, an engineer, an accountant, and if John Smith is proposing to be a thorough-going Christian, then his Christianity is bound to infect all he does in his many different capacities. He cannot conceivably draw a line and say "religion is religion but business is business."

Something of what is involved in God's contact and concern with everything human it will be the endeavour of the following chapters to unfold.

I

The desperate moral and material needs of our war-shattered world are sufficiently apparent, and there are plenty of people, outside the Churches as well as in them, who would be thankful enough to see what Christianity could do to assuage the wounds and rebuild the ruins. For it is generally recognized that history has not yet seen any considered attempt to apply Christianity to human affairs on any large scale. To quote once again G. K. Chesterton's dictum—for nothing more apposite on this topic has ever been said—"Christianity has not been tried and found wanting, it has been found difficult and not tried." That is exactly the point. And there are many signs that all sorts of people, superficially perhaps materialistic and not in the least religious, do in their heart of hearts believe that Christianity is worth trying, and that in the last resort nothing else will save the situation. For they are beginning to distinguish between symptoms and causes, and to see

that, unless you can find something which is potent enough to reach and eradicate innate human selfishness, to long for a new world is merely crying for the moon.

But it is not perhaps so clearly seen that if Christianity is to be applied at all it must be applied all round. You cannot call in religion to clear up difficulties which defeat your skill, and then dispense with it in other spheres where its application might be inconvenient. To do that is to fall into the departmentalism of thought and practice which is, as we have seen, the negation of true religion. It is to be feared that such departmentalism must have nullified the effects of much fervent praying during the war. It is obviously unreal to ask God to grant victory to ourselves and our Allies unless we are prepared for Him to put His hand on the things that are wrong in our national life—and to make a longish list of them would not be difficult. Yet this absolute condition of any real application of Christianity to common concerns seems to escape many intelligent people. There are those, in business and in politics, who will talk in large terms about the moral solution of world problems, but who, when it comes to the point, are not at all anxious to see too close an association between Christianity and mundane affairs. Let the Churches, they say, fight drink and vice and other specially selected moral evils; but it's "hands off" when it is a question of business, or strikes, or housing plans, or foreign politics.

II

It is important to emphasize, at the outset of our studies, that this conception of a Christianity which can be, and is divinely intended to be, applied to all the range of human living is a vital part of the message and the life that Jesus Christ brought to men. If one should try and sum up in a sentence what the task was which Jesus undertook, and

accomplished, it might be said that He came to show men God as He is, and to teach them a new way of living. As we shall see in further detail later on, these two sides of His task are inseparably interwoven, and much of the feebleness of our Christianity springs from a failure to grasp their close connection. If in any sense you are beginning to know God as Jesus reveals Him, that knowledge is bound to express itself in life; if you wish to explore the Christian way of living, you will fail unless you also arm yourself with His spiritual secret. It is with this moral and ethical side of "original Christianity" that we are for the moment concerned. We cannot too often or too eagerly follow the stream back to its source and seek to ascertain from Jesus Christ Himself what He really wanted men to do and to be. And the more we steep ourselves in the story of those days when He lived among men, the more evident does it become that the way of living He challenges men to adopt is something more than the "holiness" of ecclesiastics, which too often has an artificial smack about it, more also than an unattractive catalogue of virtues inculcated by the moralists. The manner of life He summons men to share reveals an extraordinarily high standard, but it is never cold and rigid and non-human; indeed wherever the spirit of what He meant is truly caught by any disciple of His, there you have a life which is warmly, joyfully human, and which imports into all human concerns and human relationships a radiance, a romance, and even a gaiety, such as are not to be had from a less vital source. What this life is and all it involves can only be seen by those who are prepared to investigate for themselves the story of the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth and the impression which that life made upon His contemporaries. With this purpose in view it is worth while taking a modern translation of the New Testament (such as Moffatt's or Weymouth's) and reading the gospels straight through, just as one would read an ordinary modern book, in order thus to get a general impression of the main

features of the way of living which Jesus sets before us. Some details may be difficult to understand or to interpret, but the general outline will be clear enough. Think of the kind of things He did: the way He treated people, especially people whom other folk disregarded; think of the extraordinary fashion in which He really cared for them, not with a sort of professional charity or forced "love," but with real human kindness and friendliness, from the time when He cheered the neighbours as they dropped into the carpenter's shop to the day when, for their sakes, He refused to save Himself from the cross; and think of the temper and attitude of mind which lay behind this undiscouraged service of His fellow human beings. Think of the sort of things He said, which were simply a translation into words of what He was always doing: His description in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the parables, of the best kind of human life; His shrewd insight into every human weakness and His bold appeal to all the fine stuff latent in the man that God has made—His purity, His chivalry, His fundamental humility, His capacity to do and dare anything to help a brother man or serve a worthy cause. Think of the way in which He swept away all unrealities in religion, and recall His absolute insistence on the vital importance of right conduct, and more still on the quality of spirit and motive from which right action springs.

"He made it clear that when a man comes to judgment he will be asked what he *did* with cups of cold water, and bread and clothing, that is to say, in his work and business, in his relations with creditors and debtors and his everyday living with neighbours, and he will not be able to evade the issue by inviting attention to his activities as churchwarden, or his participation in a discussion group on a Christian Social Order, important as these undoubtedly are."¹

Above all, think of the kind of picture of God He put before men, for in that conception of God the moral demand

¹ *Christian News-Letter* No. 278, p. 2.

and the moral power of the Christian way of living have their roots. *God*, He always insists, *is Life and not a religious convention*. Reference was made, at the beginning of this chapter, to the curious instinct in men that makes them invent a sort of artificial stratum of life which they call religion, and then they banish God to it. Some of the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus Christ were very clever at religion-inventing, and reduced it to a fine art. If, for instance, you were a tailor and carried your needle on the Sabbath day, you broke an important religious law and displeased God. If, on the other hand, you repaired to the Temple, selected and paid for an appropriate animal and had it sacrificed, you would be doing something religiously meritorious. It came as quite a shock to them when Jesus Christ—and He somehow seemed to know—asserted strongly that God, the real God, had nothing whatever to do with that kind of thing: that, in fact, religion was something altogether different from what they supposed. He was never tired of trying to explain to them that God has far more to do with children and flowers and laughter and tears and all the myriad little kindly things, grave and gay, happy and irksome, that weave the texture of common human living, than with the mass of religious paraphernalia which men are so fond of concocting. God, says Jesus Christ, is really interested in and concerned with all the common stuff of our brief lives: our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows, our work and our play, and all the wondrous tangle of our relationships with one another. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?—and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (St. Matthew x, 29). Now if God is like this, and if you begin to see that He is like this, then life takes on a different meaning altogether, and your reaction to life is profoundly affected. Truth is seen to be the echo of His Mind, goodness the working of His Spirit, and beauty the very texture of His garment; your

work becomes your service to Him and to your fellows, and all your relationships with your fellow-men are brought within the magic circle of a great family.

Recall, finally, that this presentation of God, with its summons to such a way of living, though of necessity profoundly and directly personal, is no mere individualism; it is, on the contrary, the most social gospel that has ever been preached; when, says Jesus in effect, men will have the faith and courage to embark on this way of living, *together*, there you have "the Kingdom of God." What else did He mean by the Kingdom of God but a new order of society in which selfishness should be ousted by love as the ruling principle of all life? He goes on to say, in many different ways, that the goodness to which He summons men, and therefore the Kingdom which He plans, are feasible; they are ideals indeed, but ideals that are capable of realization. To this point we shall return later.

III.

Such, in crude and broad outline, is the way of living to which Christ invites His disciples; a way of living which, if seriously pursued by even a fair number of persons, would be quite enough to turn our world into a very different kind of place. Yet, in this as in former generations, of all the professing Christians alive in the world, there would seem to be relatively few who give a quite clear-cut impression of a life truly Christ-like. Why is this? Partly because it always has been, and no doubt always will be, "hard to be a Christian." It is far, far easier to follow the line of least resistance. And all honour to the gallant few who will climb any heights to go after Jesus. But to say this does not at all exhaust the answer to our question. I suggest that there is another reason for the relative weakness of practical Christianity, and that is that most Christians do

not really know, or at least do not take enough pains to find out, *what it means to be a Christian in the twentieth century*. We know, or think we know, in a general sort of way, but not in a particular sort of way; our Christianity fails when we reach some of the more complicated details of life, in fact just in those very things where it ought to be and might be most effective. Most of us are far from irreligious, and some of us are still church-goers; but few of us are competent performers in the sphere of "every-day religion."

I was talking about these things recently to a friend of mine, who is foreman in a wool factory. He is honestly trying, in that factory, to do his duty as a Christian; but he is often perplexed to know exactly what that duty is. "I really want to bring more of Christianity into my working life," he was saying to me; "tell me what I've got to do and I'll try and do it." To find a convincing answer to that question is part of the main business of the Christian and of the Christian Church.

It is a matter for thankfulness that during the past twenty-five years, and especially during the years of the Second Great War, substantial progress has been made in "applying Christianity" to life's common concerns. People are at last discarding the irrational idea that Christianity is all right for an individual and for a future life, but is not meant to apply to social, national and international affairs. And in this war-shattered world there must be many who are beginning to see that justice and freedom and tolerance and the good-neighbour spirit, in fact all the constituents of a lasting peace, must enter men's minds and govern their actions from a Source beyond themselves.

It may also fairly be claimed that the Christian Church in recent years has recovered much of the ground lost in the previous century and has marched in the vanguard of social reform, both in consistently upholding Christian standards and values as the principles for all reform, and in supplying the spiritual driving force without which all

efforts at reconstruction are liable to slow down. It would be beyond the scope of this chapter to attempt any history of the Christian social reform movements of the last thirty years. Suffice it only to draw attention to a body which has come into being as the climax and focus of many of these movements, namely, the British Council of Churches, an officially representative body which brings together the Christian Churches of Great Britain and Ireland (except the Roman Catholic Church) for common thought and action, and has marked a new and notable stage in the steadily developing growth of Christian fellowship and collaboration.¹

IV

Everyone's way of living is determined ultimately by his standard of values. What is life really for? What are the things that really matter? How can life and personality be most fully realized? These questions are answered by "the world" in one way, by Jesus Christ in quite another way. It is important to see how great a gulf divides the two answers. You cannot really make a compromise between them, as the Church has sometimes tried to do, with disastrous results. You cannot serve God and mammon. The need of the world, and of the Church, to-day is for more Christians who, flinging caution and compromise to the winds, will take Christ's standard of values and proceed resolutely to work them out in all the conditions of modern living.

Chief among the possible lines of advance are those of corporate and personal thinking, followed by corporate and personal experiment. There are already some groups of

¹ The Council works largely through strong Committees for (a) Social Reconstruction, (b) International Affairs, (c) Faith and Order (dealing with questions of Reunion), (d) Evangelism, and (e) Youth. Headquarters: 56 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1.

Christians, and there ought to be many more, trying by joint thinking to find out what should be involved in Christian discipleship under modern conditions. With regard to corporate experiment, think what it might mean if sufficiently strong and representative groups in specific industries or certain professions were to make fresh and bold experiments in applying Christianity to their several callings. Meantime, pending any considerable Christianization of the conditions of present-day living, it can hardly be denied that, within the framework of society as it is, there is enormous scope for personal adventure in Christian living. Every one of us who "means business" in this matter can probably think straight away of certain domains of personal living and relationships (some of which will be discussed in the chapters that follow) which have never been thoroughly and finally claimed for Christianity. As to the importance of theory and practice going hand in hand, I may quote a story from the mission field, which will emphasize the point better than any lengthy argument. The story goes that a Korean came into the study of a missionary one day and said, "I have been memorizing some verses in the Bible, and thought I would come and recite them to you." The missionary listened while this convert repeated in Korean, without a verbal error, the entire Sermon on the Mount. Feeling that some practical advice might be helpful, the missionary said, "You have a marvellous memory to be able to repeat this long passage without a mistake. However, if you simply memorize it, it will do you no good. You must practise it." The Korean Christian smiled as he replied, "That's the way I learned it." Somewhat surprised, the missionary asked him what he meant, and he said, "I am only a stupid farmer, and when I tried to memorize it the verses wouldn't stick. So I hit upon this plan. I memorized one verse and then went out and practised that verse on my neighbours until I had it; then I took the next verse and repeated the process, and the experience has been such a blessed one

that I am determined to learn the entire Gospel of Matthew that way." And he did it.

That, after all, is the only way. The only way to learn to pray is, not to read books about prayer, but to pray. The only way to become Christlike is, not to devour books on Christian ethics, but to plunge recklessly into Christ's way of living. And if a man has the pluck to do that, he will assuredly find that the motive and the knowledge and the dynamic for such a life are increasingly available. The power to be like Christ is, by a law that never fails, invariably given to those who are willing to walk with Him in a joyful, personal companionship. This is revolutionary Christianity—for to walk with Him and live by love does mean the turning upside down of all ordinary human conventions and human standards. This is creative Christianity—for it solves the insoluble problem of transforming human nature: you will never get a changed world unless you can provide changed men. This is the Christianity after which men to-day are groping, and which has in it that which can save the world.



II

And it shall come to pass . . . that many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths . . . and He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

MICAH iv, 1-3.

Christ is our peace, He who has made us a unity and destroyed the barrier which kept us apart.

EPHESIANS ii, 14 (Moffatt's version).

The history of the human race is the diary of a bear-garden.

THE GENTLEMAN WITH A DUSTER

Standing as I do in view of God and of eternity, I realize that patriotism is not enough; there must be no bitterness, no hatred in my heart towards anyone.

EDITH CAVELL, just before her execution.

He drew a circle that shut me out,
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;
But love and I had the wit to win,—
We drew a circle that took him in.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF LIVING TOGETHER

1. *In the World*

I

AT this time of day—these lines are penned at the end of the second world war—it is hardly necessary to argue that an ordinary man's everyday life, including his religion, is bound up with what happens in the great world around him. Taught by bitter experience, we all now know that neither a man nor a nation has any hope of escape into a private security; peace and happiness for each of us are tied up with peace and happiness for all the world. Which is the reason why the age-old problem of human living together is given a foremost place in this series of studies in "every-day religion."

There can surely be little doubt that we are entering—have indeed entered—on a period which may prove to be one of the major watersheds of history. There is every sign that an epoch is closing, and that a new era is struggling to the birth; as many of us dare to hope, an era more Christian than the "Christendom" which it is succeeding. We have reached a decisive hour for mankind. We must either choose another and better way of living together and survive, or, employing the new-found atomic energy for destruction, perish. As Sir Lawrence Bragg said in a recent broadcast, "we are living at the present moment just at the beginning of one of those times when the whole structure of human society undergoes a vast change and reorganization," change of a kind that may only happen at intervals of ten or twenty thousand years.

The victory in this last war can only be the winning of the first round in a far more permanent, subtle, spiritual warfare for the survival of man, a warfare in which humanity has never ceased, and will never cease, to be engaged. The effort and the cost of allied victory has been, God knows, beyond all computation; two generations, in the last war and in this one, have had to offer themselves for the sacrifice. But, however terrible the price, victory cannot actually accomplish more than forcibly to prevent Nazism from establishing its diabolical sway over Europe and the world. After a prodigious struggle, victory, so to speak, clears the ground for the next stage. It overthrows the Hitlerite structure of hate, oppression and cruelty with all their attendant devilries; and it makes it possible to build a different structure compacted of freedom, tolerance, compassion, mercy and brotherhood. We, the nations of Europe and the world, now have the chance to build this better structure; what we shall actually do remains to be seen. It is worth noting, moreover, that we are being given, what is very rare in history, a second chance; having lost the first a quarter of a century ago. The opportunity is favourable; it is unlikely to be offered a third time; and the penalty of inaction may be disaster. In truth, this is "a time for greatness," if ever there was one.

Before attempting to begin any really permanent peace-building, the world is finding the "change-over" period marking the transition from war to "peace" to be a time of much difficulty and confusion, of perplexity and even of peril. Even as these words are written the problem is still largely unsolved of saving Germany and other parts of Europe from starvation; without food, and without raw material to restart their industries, it will be an almost impossible task to "re-educate" the Germans and to re-orient their national and political life. Most of all they need, and will continue to need, all the moral and spiritual help which they can derive, both from within themselves

and from friendly nations. Both in the ex-enemy countries, and in the victorious powers, it is essential that there should exist a mind and temper without which any real "peace-making" will be a hopeless task. Hunger, accompanied by economic chaos, can easily breed a growing demand for vengeance; and after six years of terrible war there must be millions of people only too prone to believe that violence is the only way to get anything done. It is for Christians and men of goodwill in every land to resist this temper, and to set moving instead other currents of thought and feeling—patience, mercy, understanding and unconquerable goodwill.

Nor is such a spirit of conciliation incompatible with the punishment of Germany's war criminals which the dictates of justice clearly demanded, and which the Nuremberg trials, after due evidence of guilt, largely secured. It may be that these historic trials will prove a big step towards building up a code and a process of international law, long recognized as indispensable foundations of world peace.

Whatever the outcome of these trials, it is noteworthy—and it might well have received wider notice in our own press—that some outstanding German Church leaders issued at Stuttgart, in the autumn of 1946, a declaration in the course of which they spoke, with deep and courageous penitence, of sharing a solidarity of guilt with the German people "for the endless suffering which through the German nation has been brought to many peoples and countries." Such an act of penitence, which at once elicited an appreciative and sympathetic reply from the Archbishop of Canterbury, contributes substantially to the laying of the moral foundations of a new Germany. And the least we can do, in this country, is to meet such a brave statement with a deeper realization, and indeed more public confession, of our own share of guilt for the fearful common catastrophe. "We in Britain," declares a recent *Christian News-Letter Supplement* (No. 255), with which I would willingly associate myself, "displayed a criminal levity with

regard to our obligation to defend order and peace; and, if the Germans have been intolerably passive in resisting the rise of the Fuehrer, there was a passiveness hardly less conspicuous or less open to reproach on the part of ourselves and other nations, and condoned by our Churches, as we watched the National Socialist system get its stranglehold on the life of Germany, and were too careless or too idle to take the military precautions necessary for Europe's freedom. Although no man's guilt goes so deep as the guilt of Hitler and Himmler, no Nation, no Party, no Church, no University, is free from some responsibility for the doom which has come upon us."

In the closing months of the war punishment was meted out to the Germans on a truly terrible scale; and no Christian can rightly contemplate any deliberate penal addition to the sufferings and misery which the German people have endured and are enduring. No stable peace can ever be built if the demons of despair and fear and revenge should range at large among the peoples; the only hope lies in a new spirit of trust and forgiveness, and above all—however long it may take—in the moral and spiritual re-education of the German nation. The only real victory over that nation will be to win them to a genuine belief, which they have hitherto completely lacked, in the "good neighbour" policy between states. "More important for Europe"—I quote from a recent publication—"than political and economic planning is the recreation of broken men and women, the supplanting of hopelessness by hope, of revenge by forgiveness, of fear by love."

II

Supposing then that there can take place some radical change in the common mind, some birth of a temper and attitude which would make peace possible, what, we may

go on to ask, are some of the practical measures which would be found necessary for translating this common desire into action? In other words—for lasting peace ~~there~~ obviously be something far more constructive than the mere absence of war—what are the conditions for building up some kind of *world community*? “The real problem of security,” it has been aptly pointed out, “is not that of keeping the nations peacefully apart, but that of bringing them actively together.”

(a) That careful and thorough planning is essential, is obvious enough; we are entering an epoch when a planned society is inevitable; manifestly the world must plan or perish. Moreover, any failure to reconstruct will breed new Hitlers; Hitlers are the certain consequence of national frustration, of economic disease, of international chaos.

The first plank in the new plans, and the primary condition of an international order, is some union of law and force; there is indeed now emerging a large consensus of opinion which envisages a world political order based on justice and supported by power. Power there must be; no social order, within a state or between states, is possible without it; but there is all the difference in the world between Hitler's use of power and—say—an international police force restraining an aggressor state. In the present stage of human evolution it is, as I believe, moral, and even Christian, to regard force as an instrument, an instrument which, controlled by law, may be and should be an effective servant of peace.

In the new United Nations Organization (UNO) this omission in the old League of Nations is made good, and there is now provision for organized international justice armed with the power to enforce its decisions. The UNO General Assembly, representing fifty-four Governments, has given to the Security Council the task of organizing the control of atomic energy, the impartial international inspection of forces and weapons, the abolition of weapons of

mass destruction, and the creation of international security forces. The framework is in the making: it rests with the nations to use it. This time, as compared with twenty-five years ago, the prospects of effective peace-making are certainly brighter owing to the fact that the United States have abandoned their isolation and are already taking their full share of responsibility in world affairs.

Nevertheless there remains the inescapable fact that the Security Council can only function so long as the major powers can settle their differences by agreement. How difficult this co-operation is proving, and how much suspicion and mistrust has to be overcome, is everywhere evident. The usefulness of the new organization is gravely impaired by these mutual suspicions; and, indeed, a mockery is made of it when unilateral action is taken by any of its members in defiance of the others. This destroys the hope in which the organization was born in neglecting the spirit in which alone it can function. If, as we all hope and pray, the major powers can develop some real and trustful co-operation these next few years, the world will be given a breathing space in which it may prove possible to lay firmer foundations for a lasting peace. If they fall out, no system or paper constitutions can keep them together; any attempt on the part of one of them to apply force or "sanctions" against another might well plunge the world into the dreaded third great war which would indeed, fought out with atom bombs, spell the end of civilization.

It is manifest, and should be duly emphasized, that to our own nation and commonwealth there is given, in these critical years, a responsibility for moral leadership in Europe and the world which is without parallel in our history and which we dare not evade. For my part I cannot escape the conviction, a conviction widely shared, that through these fateful years our nation has been saved *for a purpose*; we have survived our stupendous ordeal, not for any merit on our part, but because God has something

for us to do. People often spoke about the "miracle" of Dunkirk. Hardly less miraculous was it that, immediately afterwards, with only a handful of our armed troops to defend this island, the two hundred divisions of the German Army, flushed with victory, made no attempt to invade. Or again there was the "miracle" of El Alamein, of Malta, of the Allied recovery in the years which followed. Was all this just chance? Was it the "fortune of war"? Or did it mean that some Plan, from beyond ourselves, was being worked out? No Christian, with the Bible before him, can doubt that God holds the issues of history in His hand and uses nations for working out His righteous purposes. Despite all the faults and failures of our past, despite much that is still wrong in our national life, despite our share in the widespread godlessness which has been the ultimate cause of the war, there are signs that God has a mission for us in the world, and that we have been saved, "not to go back to our football matches, our dog tracks, our winter sports in Switzerland, our industrial squabbles and party bickerings,"¹ but because God has something for us to do for Him and His purposes.

(b) But even international justice, providing a measure of world security and ways for peaceful political changes, is not enough. Final security will elude us all without positive and constructive action in the economic and social sphere, on the national and international scale. The structure of world community will need to be supported by twin pillars, political and economic, both resting on the moral foundation of faith in God and a "good-neighbour" attitude between the nations. It is clear enough now that a chief reason for "losing the peace" last time should be sought in the trade policies of the victor nations. They, the victor nations, were supreme; they controlled the trade of the world; yet their economic warfare against one another reduced world trade and lifted unemployment to unpre-

¹ *The Listener*, 5th March, 1942.

cedented and staggering levels. Economic disease will inevitably breed war; if food doesn't cross the frontiers armies will. Nations with a depressed economic life will always be tempted to lift themselves out of their distress by an aggressive war. As the Australian Minister of External Affairs, Dr. Evatt, has pointed out, "the mass of the people everywhere is enormously patient. By meeting their needs one would deprive aggressive leaders of a chance to gather a large following behind them. Give people a moderate sufficiency of what they need and ought to have, and they will keep the peace; this has been proved time and again nationally, but it has not yet been tried internationally." But it is at last recognized, by ordinary people as well as by economic experts, that the day has gone by for ever when any one nation can prosper at the expense of others. It is not merely that a nation *ought* to consider the welfare of other nations; by iron laws its own welfare is wholly unattainable without such consideration. It is only an economy planned on an international basis that can possibly secure within each country "improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security" as demanded by Article V of the Atlantic Charter.

Nations which can think and plan and work and organize on the stupendous scale and with the prodigious efficiency which war requirements have evoked have no need to fear their lack of power to solve the new problems of production and consumption, of transport and distribution and money reform, which an economic world order will demand. Never again must be seen the scandal, the tragedy, of wheat burnt on the fields and coffee thrown into the sea while half the world goes hungry. The still unsolved problem of the production and equitable distribution of food for all is already receiving the close attention of one of UNO's Commissions, the Food and Agricultural Organization, out of which it is hoped that there will come into being a permanent and effective "World Food Board."

All this world planning in the political and economic spheres is matched by great—even grandiose—plans for bringing the nations together in the realms of thought and culture; “UNESCO” (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has already begun to function, with delegations including leaders of the arts, sciences, cultural and educational activities in their respective member states. If the Food Board is to combat physical hunger and poverty, UNESCO is to attack the problems of mental hunger and spiritual poverty over the same wide field. These problems will obviously be of immense range and complexity; not least because, while experts may possibly agree as to what constitutes healthy food for the body, other experts may well disagree violently on the question of the right diet for mind and soul. UNESCO, therefore, is well advised to begin, as indeed it is doing, on the more practical tasks of restoring destroyed libraries and museums, restarting educational and cultural work in countries devastated by war, attacking illiteracy, making factual and critical surveys of needs, and even supplying pencils for schools. As to the real ultimate aims of education, and the standards and values of different cultures, the Christian Church ought to have a good deal to say; and it is eminently desirable that Christians, and possibly Christian Churches or societies in a corporate capacity, should be “in on the ground floor” in this new and ambitious structure. Too often the Church has stood aside from new movements and thereby lost ground that cannot be recovered later.¹

(c) A locomotive without steam, a car or plane without petrol, an electric lamp that is not plugged in—even so are all the political and economic plans for world security without some adequate moral driving power behind them. The old League of Nations failed precisely for lack of such

¹ For a discussion of Christianity and UNESCO, see *Christian News-Letter* No. 274, of 27th November, 1946.

power. And the new schemes will only work if the participating nations are wholly determined to make them work, and to that end are prepared to make the necessary sacrifices of selfish nationalism and unrestricted sovereignty. Indeed, in considering the possibilities of economic and political reconstruction on a world scale, it is no good minimizing the stubborn obstacles of nationalist sentiment and national sovereignty, which are constantly frustrating common-sense schemes for world-betterment. As Mr. Eden said on one occasion in the House of Commons, while nationalist sentiment is as strong as ever, every succeeding scientific discovery makes greater nonsense of the old-time conception of national sovereignty. Until the forces of nationalism can be abated, it will be a severe struggle to bring into effective existence law and justice and police and the free flow of goods on an international scale. It has been truly said that one of the main causes of war is the proposition that men owe a boundless devotion to their own country and none whatever to any other country. As Lord Quickswood once pointed out, "what is needed is to realize that nationalism is not a quasi-religion, as some people seem almost to imagine, but a human passion, like other passions beneficent only so long as it is strictly disciplined and controlled by the moral law, mischievous and debasing so soon as it passes beyond that control. Nationalism is like the passion of acquisition or the passion of possession or the passion of sex. Within the limits which moralists have long ago assigned to them, these passions are beneficent; they are, indeed, the mainspring of a very large part of human action. But we have long ago learned not to tolerate their excess beyond the limits of the moral law. We should not be impressed if a thief at the Old Bailey dilated on the wholesome joy of acquisition, or if a ravisher quoted the amatory poets in a sentimental vein; yet we listen to just such absurdities from offending nationalists. We are almost put to silence about their crimes when they talk of their

love for their country. *Patriotism has become, in a different sense from Dr. Johnson's meaning, the last refuge of a scoundrel; or, rather, it is his convenient cudgel to batter critics dumb.*"

It is impossible to exaggerate the need of a new moral dynamic. As at last after the years of sweat and toil and tears and blood, and in this post-war period of confusion and frustration, we draw nearer to our goal, it is well to remind ourselves what the goal really is, lest perchance the dust of the long conflict begin to dim our vision of it. Our enemies knew what they were fighting for; power and piracy were their absolute values, which bred in the German nation a fanatical strength of will. But those "Satanic" values, which the Allied victory has not killed but only driven underground, can only be adequately and permanently countered by absolute values which are *true*, and therefore in the end more powerful. The enemy will to kill, though now for the time crushed, can only be effectively opposed, not just by the will not to be killed nor by keeping him under iron restraint, but by a passionate belief in justice, in law, in freedom, in the rightness and the practicability of the "good-neighbour" life.

The Allied power to make war, and to make it successfully, was, so I for one believe, largely inspired by this vision and this faith. Since the war ended the greater test began. With the actual dangers of death and defeat past, can we, the victorious nations, possess and apply, for winning the peace, the same moral qualities which were chiefly responsible for winning the war?

III

The question asked just above is bound up, as I would urge, with the whole question of the power and prospects of Christianity in our contemporary world. I for one should

cherish little hope of a new world of peace and security were it not for the Spirit of God moving in our midst, and, if only we would let Him, ready to operate on a far vaster scale.

It would surely be generally agreed that it is in the region of thought that all evils have their origin and that all reforms must needs begin. This last and terrible war, for instance, is not like an earthquake or volcanic eruption, unpredictable and uncontrollable by human beings; it is a mirror of the way in which a very large number of people in the world think, and have thought for a great many centuries. And the "just and lasting peace" for which we pray will only come as a sufficient number of people begin to think differently. And how is such a stupendous mental change-over to be effected?

Christianity has an answer; as many of us are convinced the true and the only answer. The kind of thought which, on the large scale, produces war, is always operating on the lesser scales of life, as we all know to our cost and to our shame. Self-assertion, greed, pride, fear, inertia, cowardice, the instinct to strike, to hurt, to kill—the Bible sums them all up as "sin." Even Bernard Shaw has remarked that nothing can prevent war but conviction of sin. Some people dislike the word "sin" and think it obsolete. But no discussion of words to describe the thing can alter the obstinate fact that a kind of poison is at work in the very springs of man's being; the late Lord Morley described it as "a horrid impediment of the soul." It is the working of this poison, which is no figment of theology but a fact of life, which makes man think he is master of his fate and of the universe; which sets him against God, against God's laws, and against his fellow-man. Of course calamity follows. All the marvellous technical advance of the last hundred years—steam, electricity, flying, wireless—has been won by observing and obeying the laws; disobedience here spells failure, and often disaster. Obeying the laws which

govern physical nature, man has flagrantly disobeyed those other laws which govern human nature and all human relationships; hence catastrophe on a world scale. There is a true sense in which the war was a judgment on our civilization; there was nothing arbitrary about it, it was a self-acting judgment on those who acted contrary to the fundamental nature of reality. It was no more arbitrary than the doom which overtakes a man who should walk over a precipice with his eyes open.

This sin-poison is universal. It burst out, on a large scale and in a particularly virulent fashion, among those who were lately our enemies. Its results, in their policies and actions, were plain for all the world to see and were no doubt a major cause of the war. But let no man think that this poison, this spirit of anti-Christ, is confined to Germany. It has a lodgement in the hearts of all of us. And there is no hope of health and harmony, for ourselves and for the whole world, unless the only antidote can be set to work, widely and effectively.

It is the heart of the Christian message, the very core of its "good tidings," that in such a situation God has come, and is always coming, to the rescue. In Jesus Christ, God, as Christians are convinced, has broken out of eternity into our world of space and time; He has "come down" into the midst of our sin and suffering, our disobedience and despair, to redeem, to re-make and to restore. On this great theme there will be more to be said later.¹ At the moment, in connection with the argument of this chapter, the point to be emphasized is that this idea of an antidote to the sin-poison is fact not theory; through the centuries there have been, and all over the world there still are, those who have turned from evil to God, have found in Him the secret of a new and better life, and have done their utmost to share their secret with their fellow-men. It is obvious that if there were more of these "Christians," more men and women

¹ See Chapter XIII, "The Root of the Matter."

who abandon the way of enmity for the way of love, there would at least be a setting and an atmosphere, in which the at present intractable problems of human living together might be solved. It is the function of these Christian "cells," in every land and every nation, to leaven the whole vast mass of human thinking and human relationships. And it is for the Church all the time to be getting on with the business of providing Christians and "Christian cells." While the Church dare not neglect the task of thinking out the relation of the Kingdom of God to all the complex range of human living, she must all the time, with undiscouraged persistency, keep at her great essential work of winning men into the Kingdom. On this topic more will be said later.¹

Not less vital is it that the Church should continually demonstrate to the world what human fellowship may be. It can hardly be without shame that a son of the Church should make this claim on behalf of the Christian society. Who are we, in a Church that is broken, divided, marred at a hundred points by a spirit of suspicion, of faction, of aloofness, of intolerance; a Church that has not yet triumphed over class distinctions and colour distinctions, a Church that has often sided with the rich against the poor, a Church that has been in war quick to take sides and in peace slow to forgive—who are we that we should preach fellowship to the world? And yet, despite all our failure in this thing, we do know, with a certainty nothing can shake, and within a limited range have actually experienced, that the only way in which barriers can be broken down and real fellowship achieved is when men come to realize themselves to be brothers in the family of God. We in the Christian Churches are perhaps at last beginning to apprehend that *God is love*, and that the one essential, unmistakable mark of any of His servants is to walk in love, to live by the binding law of fellowship. How slow official religion has been to see this thing and to proclaim it! "Commun-

¹ Cf. Chapter XIII.

ism," to quote a somewhat caustic comment, "has been a reminder to Christians of an unfulfilled duty."

But there is another side to the picture. The Church, in large measure, is proclaiming it at last and, in every corner of the world, living it. It is not too much to say that a pattern of world community is actually in being. Those who, like myself, were present at Canterbury Cathedral at the Enthronement of William Temple, the late Archbishop—surely one of the greatest Christians and greatest Archbishops whom God has given to the world—will remember the thrilling moment when, after having been seated in St. Augustine's chair, he ascended the pulpit to give his message to that great congregation and to the world beyond, and almost in his first words spoke of the fact of the world-wide Church. "As though in preparation for such a time as this," he said, "God has been building up a Christian fellowship which now extends into almost every nation, and binds citizens of them all together in true unity and mutual love. No human agency has planned this. It is the result of the great missionary enterprise of the last hundred and fifty years. Neither the missionaries nor those who sent them out were aiming at the creation of a world-wide fellowship interpenetrating the nations, bridging the gulfs between them, and supplying the promise of a check to their rivalries. The aim for nearly the whole period was to preach the Gospel to as many individuals as could be reached so that those who were won to discipleship should be put in the way of eternal salvation. Almost incidentally the great world-fellowship has arisen; it is the great new fact of our era; it makes itself apparent from time to time in World Conferences such as in the last twenty years have been held in Stockholm, Lausanne, Jerusalem, Oxford, Edinburgh, Madras, Amsterdam."

Here then, in the Christ-inspired "good-neighbour" life, where men think and speak and act as "friends of God and friends of one another," is the answer to the world-wide

desire for the clue to "*community*" living. It is striking how that word has become one of the key words in the vocabulary of reconstruction. It is "*community*" that people want: more real sharing, more of joint ownership, joint responsibilities, joint recreation, locally, nationally, internationally. But any kind of joint living, from the family to a League of Nations, is a high and difficult art, and has to be laboriously learnt and mastered. In recent centuries man has been enormously interested, and remarkably successful, in mastering the material world by his science and technology; but he has been proportionately backward in making any considered and concerted attempt to discover "how persons and groups with divergent and opposed points of view may harmonize their competing purposes and achieve that community of persons in which alone men as social beings can find satisfaction."

Christianity never says this art of communal living is easy, but it claims that it is abundantly possible; when men find and are found by God, then the whole range of their human relationships is lifted to a new level. When you try to look at people as you imagine Christ looks at them, when you look out for the divine spark in them however deep buried it may seem at first, when undiscouraged you treat them as friends and neighbours, seeking only how you may help and serve—then some response is certain, and a very great response possible. Then and there is created a "cell" of true community life.

IV

One last word may be added, on this inexhaustible theme of Christianity and world peace, from a plain and practical point of view. What, it may well be asked, can any one individual do to bend history towards such a goal? There are a good many things he can do, especially if he realizes

that it is ultimately the individual who counts, and that public opinion is the sum total of a number of private opinions. He can help the Church, in a hundred different ways, to bear its witness and make its contribution along the lines indicated above. After all it is "the Church"—the worshipping community of Christ's people, who believe in God, say their prayers, and follow Christ's way—that keeps the Christian religion alive in the world at all. So every parish, every congregation, every prayer group, every single Christian person counts.

Again, the man who wants to help this cause will be careful, as a Christian, to cultivate a world outlook. He will refuse to be wholly absorbed in the needs and cares and tasks of his immediate environment; realizing that he serves One who loves the whole world, he will keep an eye on the far horizons, and watch for the Kingdom's coming in the affairs and relations of nations and races. He will understand that the enterprise of Missions Overseas is no mere hobby of a few of the religiously inclined, but is vitally bound up with world peace and world progress, and deserves the ardent support of every public-minded person. These large ideas and spacious hopes will affect his reading as well as his thinking, and do much to determine his choice of books and papers.¹ And, in the same way, he will take pains to do a very difficult thing—to get his opinions and his judgments salted with true Christianity. There seem to be so many "Christians" whose opinions on all sorts of ordinary matters appear to have strayed miles away from the ideas and standards of Jesus Christ. Perhaps very often the last part of a man to be converted is the region of his political opinions and prejudices. Not that all "Christian" opinions would necessarily be the same: they will surely show a wide divergence within the limits of being Christian.

¹ There are available in these days large numbers of well-written books and pamphlets describing the progress of God's Kingdom in all parts of the world. For information, consult Edinburgh House Press, 2 Eaton Gate, S.W.1, and Student Movement Press, 56 Bloomsbury Street, W.C.1.

But to be "Christian" in a true sense they must be caught *from Christ* and thought out in relation to His standards, and they must be developed and matured within and not without the circle of a man's deepest praying.

Above all, if any would help to solve the problem of human living together on the widest scale, let him on the scale of his own life fling himself into the adventure of living by Christ's law of fellowship, sparing no pains to bring all his ordinary relationships within the circle of the Love of God. What will this mean in actual practice? For answer we may well turn to the most matchless picture of a love-dominated life that has ever been given, that by St. Paul in his Corinthian letter. I quote it here in full, using (with his kind permission) a paraphrase made by my friend, F. R. Barry (Bishop of Southwell):

"If I have all the gifts of a revivalist and have not love, I am merely a braying trumpet, or the clapper of a bell. Though I am a preacher and know all God's secrets, and all the theology there is, and though I believe in God so much that I can remove mountains, but have not love, I do not count. Though I spend all my income on philanthropy, though I am ready even for the stake, but have not love, there is nothing in it. Love does not take offence, is always trying to do good turns to others. Love is not jealous, does not swagger, does not stand on its dignity. Always behaves like a gentleman, never plays for its own hand; does not get peevish; sees the best in others; always champions the under dog; is glad when other people find the truth; never loses courage; never loses faith; never loses hope; always sees it through to the end. Love never lets you down. If it is sermons, they will be out of date; if it is emotionalism, it will stop; if it is theology, it will be superseded. For our knowledge is fragmentary, and our preaching is fragmentary. When the perfect whole has come, the fragmentary will be out of date. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, I used to think like a child, I used to reason like a

child. When I became a man, I found childish things out of date, for now we see but a blurred reflection, but then face to face. Now my knowledge is partial, but then I shall know fully for myself, just as God already knows me. These are the three things which stand the test: faith, hope and love, but the biggest of these is love."

III

Jesus said: My rule of life is this: you are to treat every one else as you would like people to treat you; this is the essence of God's revealed law of conduct.

ST. MATTHEW vii, 12 (paraphrase by J. A. Findlay).

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 1 JOHN iv, 20.

He looketh for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. HEBREWS xi, 10.

To seek for the reproduction of Christ's mind in the mind of the community is the greatest aim that we can cherish.

PHILLIPS BROOKS

If we do not Christianize industry, industry will de-Christianize England.

If the Christian ideal vividly expressed and plainly translated into terms of action could be proclaimed, we believe that the new age now opening might be fashioned according to the pattern of Jesus Christ. We Christians can only fail if we are either not intelligent enough to understand our Gospel or not honest enough to apply it. *Statement of Aims of the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship.*

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM OF LIVING TOGETHER

2. *Within the Nation*

I

I REMEMBER a few years ago walking through a dreary alley in Shadwell, S.E., an alley which you would think a fit habitation for rats, but not for the human beings who in point of fact were living there. Never have I seen houses so grimy and filthy and repulsive; they can hardly have had a wash or coat of paint since they were put together by the original jerry-builders. The houses looked out on to a high blank wall, as filthy as themselves, at a distance of exactly five feet. In them there were people living, several families to a house, people who often had not got enough to eat, and who in any case know, and can know, next to nothing of the real meaning of life. It is just two miles to the nearest park or open space of any kind, and the poor frowsy-looking women seemed to have become infected with the squalor and ugliness of their surroundings.

Since I stood in that alley the conscience of the nation has undergone a remarkable awakening as to the scandalous and removable evils of slums, overcrowding, poverty, malnutrition, and economic insecurity in general. With the famous Beveridge Report pointing the way, a nation-wide effort has been initiated to tackle some of these problems, especially the housing one.

But what has religion to say about these evils and these problems? And has it any remedy to propose? Now religion, and by religion I mean Christianity, has usually said one of two things when confronted with this kind of human misery. It either says that the "saving of a man's

soul" is so overwhelmingly important that nothing else about him, such as his house and his clothes, can be said to matter very much, and that in any case undeserved suffering in this world will be made up for in another, where all wrongs will be put right. Or it says (and this is the view which underlies every sentence in this book) that the external things of a man's life do matter very much indeed, and that Christianity is profoundly concerned with them, and is not at all prepared to postpone to another world the setting right of human wrongs. This view agrees with the first-named, that Jesus Christ died, and lives, to "save" mankind; but it holds, with passionate conviction, that you cannot detach a man's "soul" for the purposes of religion, nor can you isolate the life of the spirit; rather, the "life" which is God's gift to men is something for the whole personality in all its elements and relationships, material as well as spiritual, and is intended by Him to be realized in very large measure in *this* world. Else why are we taught to pray "Thy kingdom come . . . on earth"?

Consider for a moment what is involved in this idea of *realized life*, for in it we shall find a principle to guide us amid the complexities and ramifications of the inexhaustible topic of these chapters. If there is any meaning and purpose in the world, and if Jesus Christ is right about the absolute value of human personality (see, for instance, St. Luke xii, 6, 7, 22-32, xv, and many similar passages), then the conclusion is irresistible that every single human being has the right to an opportunity of living the best and fullest life of which he is capable. This fact that a human being has absolute value in the sight of God has received fresh and sharp emphasis in recent years. The denial of that value has its logical and inevitable outcome in the horrors of the Belsen and Buchenwald Concentration Camps; whereas its assertion, based directly on a firm belief in a God of love who cares for the creatures He has made, is the only assured motive and dynamic for all schemes for human betterment.

That the capacity to "live" varies indefinitely, and that numbers may reject or misuse their opportunity to live does not invalidate every man's right to a freedom to shape his outer life to his inner ideal, to a reasonable scope for the development of personality, to "such a life," in Hooker's phrase, "as our nature doth desire: a life fit for the dignity of man." At present, such a life is the privilege of the few, and the many have to view it from afar, as an unattainable dream. How can you live "a life fit for the dignity of man" if you and all your family are herded together in one or two dirty rooms, if your work is some soulless monotonous drudgery, if your earnings barely suffice for food and clothes, if you are never free from the fear of going under in the struggle for existence, if you have neither the knowledge nor the means nor the leisure to enter any of the thousand gates that open on the wide domains of truth and beauty? That—that maimed, stunted, imprisoned life, is what "poverty" means. And such poverty is the lot of some hundreds of thousands of our fellow-citizens in this land; poverty which inevitably entails physical and mental deterioration, and almost inevitably moral deterioration as well. And, up to the present, the poverty has usually been accompanied by a numbing sense of insecurity: a perpetual fear of losing the job. "Political liberty," remarks Dr. J. S. Whale, "without economic security is a dreadful mockery to the man who lives in daily fear of what the postman may bring—a polite intimation that the firm is regretfully unable to employ him any longer."

Yet it is impossible to describe this matter of full human living solely in terms of *rights*. If one should use such a phrase as "the right to life," it must in the same breath be added that your right to "live" carries with it a bounden duty to recognize and facilitate your neighbour's right to "live"; for the very good reason that true life is incompatible with any form of selfishness. He whose supreme gift is abundant life has been at pains to make men under-

stand that "whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it" (St. Mark viii, 35), and to insist that you should "love your neighbour as *yourself*" (which means that his attainment of life should matter to you as much as your own). Unquestionably, it is the failure to live the good-neighbour life, and the selfishness of most of us, which are the major causes of the social evils which afflict the community.

One other preliminary, but fundamental, consideration may be emphasized here. It is that this human heritage of an adequate life, or rather the opportunity to appropriate this heritage, can never be enjoyed by the majority of men so long as it is left to individuals to seize it as best they can. Such an arrangement, or lack of arrangement, is a survival of paganism, and merely means that the weaker ones are pushed to the wall and get nothing. Life which is not, as we have seen, a purely personal possession, can only become available for individuals by joint action; it can only be enjoyed by the various members of a community through the united efforts of the community as a whole. What has been called the "social problem" largely consists in the facts that, hitherto, all who could have seized for themselves this "right to life," disregarding the claims of the rest, and that the community as a whole did not take effective steps to secure the exercise of the right to its weaker members. At best the community has been too neutral; at worst it has taken sides with the "haves" as against the "have-nots."

The second world war, and the years after, with all its large-scale rationing of most essential commodities, has taught us all a great lesson in sharing; the "have-nots" have fared better than ever before in our history. We all now know that, whatever government may be in power, we have got to live in a planned society; it is that or chaos. But, when you ask, as folk are always asking, who will plan the planners, the Christian answer is that God-in-Christ has

shown the true end and aim for human society; that He has, and has made known, a great purpose of good for us human beings, and that we should, and can, get ourselves and our activities into line with that master plan.

II

But let us examine a little more closely this widespread lack of the means of life.

It can be safely asserted that this terribly common lack of the opportunity to live is not a chance thing, nor inevitable; it is the result of certain causes, and those causes, in the case of our own land, are chiefly to be found in the kind of society and industry which have developed during the past two centuries and which in the main prevail to-day. And what is this kind of civilization that has thus grown up? The answer is, according to some clear thinkers, that we have allowed ourselves to become an almost purely "acquisitive society";¹ that is, the common criterion of "success" is that of getting and having and holding, while, until recently, all that society as a whole has done has been to hold the ropes and keep the ring while every man struggled for himself. After making due allowance for the selfish and predatory instincts in man, it may still be a matter of wonder how it is that "Christian England" has developed this kind of "acquisitive society." The chief explanation is to be looked for in the history of the last two hundred years. The story is by now familiar. In came the steam age (and later of course electricity), and with it the railways, the canals, the mills, the vast factories, the big stores, the slum-towns, the wealthy Victorian magnates with their pompous residences and their opulent and ugly furniture. And along with all this—what? Abject misery for a

¹ See Professor R. H. Tawney's valuable book, *The Acquisitive Society* (Bell). I am indebted to Professor Tawney for some of the thought in this chapter.

great mass of the population; women and children toiling down in the mines, tiny boys thrust up the chimneys, millions living always in penury and sometimes on the edge of starvation. And what was the theory behind such an economic structure? The theory was that enlightened self-interest, unfettered by State control, could enrich men more quickly than any other means. It certainly did so—but at what an appalling cost of sheer human misery! “It was the paradox of the nineteenth century,” says Mr. Arthur Bryant in his brilliant book, *English Saga*, “that the practice of a sturdy and often heroic individualism, which increased the potentialities of human wealth out of measure, unwittingly created social injustice and inhumanity on a scale formerly unknown to Christians.” These facts are indeed the chief explanation of a great deal of the industrial unrest of our day. Trade disputes and strikes are not very surprising when you observe that those who labour with their hands are at last beginning to be aware of the full human life which, so far, has been beyond the reach of most of them, and when you note that, in the past, there has been no other way for them to obtain a fuller share in that life save to band themselves together and seize it.¹

That this should be so, is characteristic of a social system which is based on acquisitiveness. A large part of modern industry has been organized, not chiefly to supply what people want, but to make as much profit as possible out of the producing process and to distribute the profit, not among the producers, but to those who have bought the privilege of receiving it. As an inevitable result of such a system, gain counts more than service, mechanism more than men; humanity is ignored, the real meaning of life is missed, and industry becomes an end in itself, instead of a means to an end. Such a system directly engenders self-interest and

¹ “Since the industrial revolution it has been axiomatic in the business world that man was made for industry, and not industry for man—a proposition usually summed up in the trite phrase, ‘business is business.’”—Dr. Theodore Woods, *Interpreters of God*, p. 81.

self-seeking, and provides a highly favourable soil for the twin evils of abject poverty and swollen prosperity. And it is not surprising that, where the system as a whole knows so little of moral purpose or moral method, its details should often be irreconcilable with the dictates of truth and honour. Many a man has had to choose between conforming to a lower moral standard and losing his job, and with it his livelihood.¹ It is, of course, undeniable that within the system there are large numbers of individual people and of individual firms who escape the general infection and bring to their work higher motives and honourable methods. But, however numerous such exceptions, they do not alter the fact that industry as a whole is more concerned to make large profits than to care for the well-being of its workers and to render service to the community. And I find it hard to conceive how anyone who wants to see the law of Christ prevail and believes that God has in store for humanity some far better world order than we have yet seen, and then notes the type of civilization we now enjoy, can be other than a revolutionary. He must, that is, ardently long, not for a revolution in the sense of a violent catastrophe with riot and bloodshed, but for one that shall mean a complete and drastic change of mind in men generally, a change of mind that will express itself in a new and more satisfying form of civilization.

Yet, when all that has been said, it is only fair to point out that mercy and pity have never been dead in this country; and throughout the period all the political and philanthropic forces which make for social betterment have been gathering impetus. I know it is the modern fashion to deride progress as an outworn liberal notion; nevertheless if

¹ Here are two authenticated instances: A man employed in a wholesale hosiery trade found that he was expected to pack a defective pair of stockings in every bundle of six to be sent to the retailer. Although he was a married man with a family, he had the courage to throw up the work rather than proceed with the dishonesty. A girl employed by a well-known drapery firm was expected to sew labels bearing the word "Reduced" on sale goods when she knew quite well that no reduction had taken place.

anyone will compare the general level of life, and the standard of public opinion on social matters, in 1845 and 1945 he will be compelled in honesty to admit that the change is little short of miraculous. Events have indeed moved swiftly from the Reform Bill of 1832, through the era of social and industrial legislation, to a strong Labour Government in office at the present day (1946) and a mass of legislation directed mainly towards raising the general standard of living.

But the change is not merely from "laissez-faire" to controls; a deep change in men's thinking is going on, and many are asking questions about the whole nature and purpose of our modern economic structure; especially they are asking whether it is really necessary for man and his essential humanity to be strangled by the machine he has created.

III

Those of us who believe that our present industrial and social arrangements are a remarkably poor attempt to solve the old problem of human living together are often asked what exactly we should propose to put in the place of the present system. That question I will try to answer, and indicate what an industrial order would be like which had more of Christianity in it. But, though I write as a Christian, it is only fair to point out that there is to-day a significant and a growing consensus of opinion, reached from very different points of view, as to the kind of common life that is desirable; and indeed here and there it is already beginning to take shape. Any social and industrial system which is going to satisfy the new ideals and new conscience about these matters will have to be marked by three characteristics, each of them of fundamental importance. They may be summed up in three words—service, co-operation, and humanity.

Take, first, the idea of *service*. Why should not industry be animated by the same kind of aim and outlook that characterize what are called "the professions"? Doctors and parsons and teachers do not, as a rule, make money their first consideration; they are glad enough to get a living wage and to enjoy sufficient financial security, but the main object of work with most of them is not money but what they can do for their fellow human beings. Why should not a similar motive govern the industrial process? In point of fact it is service to the community to build its houses, provide its food, make its clothes, clean its drains and arrange its transport; why then should not industry be recognized as such and organized with that end in view? Profit there would still be; but the community (which, after all, managed it in the war by means of an Excess Profits Tax) could surely find the way to effect some rational limitation of the profit made, and to secure a fairer distribution of it as between those who have lent capital and those who perform the actual labour. Until industry is reorganized in some such way as this, it is almost impossible for the individual worker, toiling perhaps at some monotonous and exacting task, to feel the inspiration and uplifting of his daily drudgery that comes from seeing it as essential service and having it recognized and rewarded as such by the rest of the community.

There are signs in these days that the emphasis is shifting, as it probably ought to shift, from production to consumption; from the financial rewards of the producer to the material needs of the consumer. Put it crudely: take the building of a house. Now, is this house being produced in order that John Smith (the consumer) may have a house to live in, or that Joe Brown the brick-layer may be provided with a job to work at, and the capital behind him dividends to distribute? Within certain limits, the profit motive, for the individual and for the business, may well be right and reasonable; but it can hardly be

denied that it has come to bulk too large in our economic system, and has been largely responsible for pushing up prices, restricting output, encouraging irresponsibility, and impeding a healthy community life. As has already been pointed out, we have tended to become a materialistic society, even an acquisitive society, with life's true values left out of sight; and in such a society there are, as there are bound to be, a thousand points where there is an absolute clash with the Christian law of love. "The enhancement of acquisitiveness renders men blind to the supreme common purpose at which a justly ordered society must aim." Nor do I believe that industries which subordinate profit to human considerations are bound to be unsuccessful; there are plenty of instances to prove the contrary.

There is in this connection a further consideration which deserves some mention. The whole trend of modern social legislation is—as many of us believe, quite rightly—to remove from the worker his ingrained sense of economic insecurity, and to give him—at the expense of "owners" and "shareholders"—a larger share in the monetary profits of his labours. But, to put the matter very bluntly, if the man at the top cannot make much money, and if the man at the bottom knows that the community will look after him if he loses his job, will either of them, or both of them, work hard enough to ensure that production doesn't go down? For it is nakedly plain, though not always plain to those in the lower levels of industry, that if there should be a serious decline in production, it would most certainly be accompanied by an even more serious decline in the general standard of living. These words happen to be written on the very day (1st January, 1947) when the coal mines are being taken over by the nation. What will be the result in the absolutely vital matter of *getting more coal*? Time alone can answer that question. It is an ominous fact that at the present time, whatever the cause—and the main cause may well be sheer post-war weariness—throughout the

whole field of industry, with the possible exception of the farms, where work proceeds with the immemorial rhythm, there is a perilous tendency to slack.

The only hope is that a new spirit should come to operate everywhere, in the director's room, the manager's office, the factory, the shop, the farm and the field; but why should we not look for the growth of such a spirit? Why should not the Army and Navy and Air Force tradition of *noblesse oblige* come to inspire all common life and labour? The poor scepticism that says men will only respond to the stimulus of selfish gain, or must always work out their destiny on the animal level of a struggle for existence, is simply blind to the higher and truer facts of human nature; these two wars surely have taught us that, if they have taught us nothing else. Let men be given but the chance to live their life and do their work on the loftier levels of service, and their response, it may justly be claimed, would be surprising and magnificent.

But if industry is to function as "service," it must, secondly, know a far higher degree of *co-operation*. A great deal of the hard drive and merciless pressure of modern industry, pressure that bears hardest on the lower strata of workers, is directly due to the relentless competition which is almost universal (and which, in its turn, is an inevitable element in the race for profits referred to above). Indeed a large move away from unrestricted competition and towards intelligent co-operation is already discernible. Before the last war men were beginning to see the futility and waste of power in, say, half a dozen milk-carts from as many different firms rattling down the same street of a morning, and to realize that some forms of partnership, as between different firms in the same trade and between employer and employed, would in the end produce more, make more things to go round, and thus conduce to the general benefit; and during the war this process of "rationalization" was very fully explored, resulting in a large

increase in production. Here again it is true that such a change of external organization will only come in response to the imperative demand of a changed human spirit; as someone has said, you cannot pool industries like the coal-miner, unless you can "pool" human hearts and human motives. The many unmistakable signs of such a demand are a sufficient answer to those who say that all these things are governed by the immutable law of pure economics, and that to try and change them is as futile as charging a brick wall. As G. A. Studdert-Kennedy used to point out, there is no such thing as a "purely economic" question, because economics are ultimately human, they are just what men make them. And there is no reason to suppose that it is really more "natural" to men to fight than to share and to combine. Who can look on the almost irrepressible brotherly instincts of man, and the way in which the modern mechanism of world-intercommunication almost forces men into neighbourliness, and deny that the instinct of fellowship and the skill to co-operate are the real law of human life and the supreme power in the world?

Thirdly, a way must be found for the *humanizing of industry*. No social and industrial system can be satisfying unless within it men can live their life and do their work as *men* and not as "hands"—God forgive us that such an expression ever found its way into our common language! A system which treats men as cogs in a machine, which chains human personalities, without any variation or relief, to soulless or repulsive tasks, which condemns them to the monotonous manufacture of "superfluous futilities," is clearly not to be tolerated by any enlightened common conscience. Admittedly we cannot put the clock back; for better or worse we are in the machine age; but we can and we must arrest the terrible process of dehumanizing the men and women who work the vast machine. God says that man, every single human being, has absolute worth; and that Christ died for him; and He, Christ, has also shown

just how human beings may live together in happy harmonious relationships. Any society which becomes so mechanized, so materialistic, so soulless, as to deny that worth and frustrate those relationships is, in fact, defying God's fundamental laws and will inevitably be found to be carrying within it the seeds of its own decay and destruction. There is no "life" for a man worthy of the name unless in his home and in his work he is able to express his manhood, to exercise his creative capacity, to develop his personality, to have space and opportunity to grow character; and yet in thousands of shops and mines and factories to-day men's labour is bought and used while the personality behind the labour is totally ignored. As a worker said to a friend of mine, "When I pass through the factory gates of a morning, I feel I leave my personality outside and become just a number." I have been told on good authority that the real cause of a coal strike in Wales some years ago lay in the following circumstance. A day labourer was killed while working in a mine. In accordance with their custom, the miners to show their sympathy stopped work and brought the body to the surface and did not return to the pit that day. When pay day came they found they were all docked a day's wages, including the dead man for the day on which he died! Could callousness further go?

In all these things great and beneficent changes are already taking place. There is a growing consensus of opinion that the first charge on every industry should be the well-being of the workers, and that to his well-being the following conditions constitute the minimum of what is essential: (a) a living wage, (b) proper housing, (c) security from unemployment, (d) a recognized status in industry, and (e) proper conditions of work (involving adequate leisure). On the lowest grounds it is obvious that in the end the fulfilment of these conditions means better business and higher productiveness; while from humanitarian and

even Christian motives many individuals and firms are already striving for reform.

Most necessary of all, and in many places already appearing, is a change of attitude, a change which shows itself in the many and varied personal relationships involved: employers and employed, management and men, and the thousand little mutual relationships of ordinary folk both inside and outside the shops and offices, the mines and docks and factories, where they do their work.¹ My own Diocese of Lichfield—if the personal reference may be permitted—comprising all Staffordshire and half Shropshire, contains some very large industrial areas, including the Potteries, the Black Country as it is called (and it *is* black, too!), as well as a good many coal mines. I naturally seek opportunities, so far as is possible, to make contacts with men and women in the places where they work, on the pot banks, in iron and steel works and so on. On various occasions I have spent several hours down a coal-mine—and I own it is a very heating and laborious proceeding!—but well worth while for the friendly and indeed intimate talks which one could enjoy with the men. I remember sitting down in the midst of the coal-dust and talking with a man right at the coal face, who gave it as his opinion that so much of the problem of the mines is a purely personal problem, depending on things like sheer honesty, a sense of responsibility, and on really trustful relationships between the workers from the top to the bottom. Indeed, in another mine that I know of, owing to a recent fresh infiltration of the Christian spirit, they have evolved a kind of family atmosphere and most successful methods of working as a team, with transfiguring results both for their own happiness and—incidentally—for the output of coal.

¹ A significant sentence from the *Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories* for the year 1945 records that “the most hopeful advance, as far as mental outlook is concerned, has been in the idea of joint consultation between management and workers through the more general acceptance of Works Committees.”

IV

Manifestly there is much in the modern programme for social and industrial reforms which should command the support of the Christian Church. Brotherhood, fellowship, partnership, the "family" idea, the absolute value of every human personality, the conception of rich life, of common good, of far-reaching purpose—these are all fundamental things in Christianity. And, as has been already claimed, the hope of the situation lies in the fact that Christianity goes infinitely further than pointing an ideal, in that it releases a universally available *power* for its achievement. Once more the question may be asked, What response is the Church making to such a tremendous challenge and such an unequalled opportunity?

It may, I think, be claimed that the Church is just beginning to fulfil the first condition of rendering any effective help: the condition of recognizing with frankness and sorrow all that has been left undone, of confessing the sin of her corporate apathy towards the terrible social evils of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and of feeling a yet deeper shame for the miseries that still persist.

"It cannot be denied that during a period when the crying injustices of the existing order were being brought prominently into the light, the Church as a whole seemed content to leave this task either to those outside its fellowship or to isolated voices within, instead of itself providing the necessary volume of righteous and enlightened zeal. Arriving only as a late-comer in this most necessary field, it largely failed to bring its Gospel to bear at the right time upon a situation that continued to develop with such tragic speed."

But it may, I think, be justly claimed that the Church's repentance has been whole-hearted, widespread, and, in many and various directions, remarkably effective. The past half-century has seen a number of important pro-

nouncements on economic and social matters made by responsible Church Authorities; such as—to name only a few out of many—statements by the Lambeth Conferences (of all the Bishops) of 1920 and 1930, the Papal Encyclicals of 1891 and 1931, the "Copec" Report of 1924, the Report of the Economic Section of the Oxford Conference of 1937. More recent, and not less important statements, have been the Malvern Conference Findings of 1941, and the famous "5 Points of the United Churches" put forth in 1940. This last statement, which was signed by the two Archbishops (Dr. Lang and Dr. Temple), Cardinal Hinsley, and the Moderator of the Free Church Council, and which unquestionably represents the point of view of most thoughtful Christians, deserves quotation. It asserts that: (1) Extreme inequality in wealth and possessions should be abolished; (2) Every child, regardless of race or class, should have equal opportunities of education, suitable for the development of his peculiar capabilities; (3) The family as a social unit must be safeguarded; (4) The sense of a Divine vocation must be restored to man's daily work; (5) The resources of the earth should be used as God's gifts to the whole human race, and used with due consideration for the needs of the present and future generations.

A good deal of the present Christian thinking on Christianity and the social order, in the world and in our own nation, has found and continues to find effective expression in papers, pamphlets and books put out by the interdenominational British Council of Churches, whose Chairman is the Archbishop of Canterbury.¹ And recent years have witnessed a number of energetic and not unsuccessful attempts to proclaim and propagate the Christian Social Gospel, up and down the land; as for instance in the many "Religion and Life Weeks" held in a number of cities,

¹ Full information about the work and the publications of the British Council may be had from the Council's Headquarters at 56 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1. See also the current edition of *A Christian Year Book* published by the Student Christian Movement Press.

towns, and even villages on an interdenominational basis. Many urban communities nowadays have a local united Christian Council, which can and does express the Christian view on local issues, and provides a convenient link between the Churches and all local efforts to better the life of the community.

Moreover there is abundant evidence that a great number of those who are, so to say, inside the industrial machine, at various levels, appreciate and willingly co-operate with the efforts of the Christian Church to apply the Christian spirit to the varied activities and ramifications of their industrial undertakings. Rotary Clubs uphold a fine ideal of "service above self," and frequently welcome Christian speakers at their gatherings; the "Christian Frontier" is a small but strong spearhead of industrialists and clergy thinking and acting together; the "Moral Rearmament" movement has already achieved some remarkable results in various mines and factories; and the new experiment of industrial chaplaincies seems to be making good headway. Many factories arrange for occasional services inside their premises, taken by invited local clergy or ministers; while some works are making the experiment of appointing a whole-time chaplain to minister to the moral and spiritual needs of their workers.

But, over and above—or rather beneath and behind—all these combined and semi-official enterprises which have just been described, the Church can never for a moment afford to relax her efforts to perform what must always be her main work, namely, that of *providing more Christians*. It is Christians, men and women inspired by the love of Jesus Christ, who can create a new public opinion without which no large reform is possible. It is the spiritual experience of Christians that supplies the highest form of social motive and social energy. It is personal Christianity that makes the best employers and the best workmen and the best neighbours. And the Christian society must perpetually

keep before its members, with all its resources of instruction and of discipline, the very highest standard of Christian discipleship. In the face of the economics of materialism, it will have the courage to set forth the Christian ethic pure and undiluted. "It will appeal to mankind, not because its standards are identical with those of the world, but because they are profoundly different. It will win its converts, not because membership involves no change in their manner of life, but because it involves a change so complete as to be ineffaceable."¹

Again, it is for Christians to show men what *Life* really signifies. Much has been said in this chapter about "life" and men's fundamental right to live it. It cannot be made too clear—and the Labour and Socialist gospels seem sometimes to blur the distinction—that to remove the material hindrances to true living is one thing, but to bestow on men the secret of life is quite another thing. If you could at a stroke abolish slums and poverty and all the evils of our industrial system, that emancipation of human personalities would not of itself teach men what life really is and how to live it—only Jesus Christ can do that. It is only He who can finally make men understand that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth. And men to-day are groping after this knowledge. Indeed the unsated hunger for the secret of life is one of the truly tragic phenomena of our day. The workers are beginning to win their freedom; but what is the good of being free to live if you don't know how to live, or if you confuse "life" with money or property or meaningless activity, or with the antics and occupations of the heroes and heroines of the films? Here is the real end of true education, as of Christian evangelism: to show men how to enter into the infinitely wonderful heritage of truth, goodness and beauty which God gives to all who humbly seek Him.

Finally, it may be stated once more, and with uncom-

¹ R. H. Tawney, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

promising directness, that Christianity offers not only the promise of a new and better world, but also the creative, transforming power that shall bring it into being. The root difficulty of the intractability of human nature is met, and only met, by the extraordinary moral potency of vital Christianity. If, as Jesus Christ insists, the Love of God is the ultimate fact of the universe, and if, through Christ, men may really take hold of that Love and make it the governing factor in all human affairs—then, evil is not invincible, and the Kingdom of God is something practicable; indeed, its coming may conceivably be nearer than we think.

IV

Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. PSALM cxxvii, 1.

And they brought [a shilling]. And Jesus saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

ST. MARK xii, 16, 17.

It is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal.

... the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life. ARISTOTLE, *Politics*.

Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants. Men have a right that these wants should be provided for by this wisdom.

Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together.

The march of the human mind is slow.

EDMUND BURKE

An alteration in the balance of English life is as inevitable now as it was in the days of the Reform Bill: it has been proceeding for the last thirty years and must be completed: and it is just. SIR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE

An eternal trait of men is the need for vision and the readiness to follow it; and if men are not given the right vision, they will follow wandering fires. *ibid.*

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIANITY AND POLITICS

“THE problem of human living together.” Some aspects of this problem, on the large scale and the small, have been examined in the two previous chapters. We have seen that the framework of a man's life, a framework which stretches from his own doorstep to the other side of the world, at every turn affects, and is affected by, the quality of his own life and character. And we have considered how this vast network of relationships, between persons and between groups of people, could be and should be disentangled and set in good order by the operation of God's spirit acting in and through human life.

Now attempts on the part of groups of people, such as a nation or a local community, to better their common life cannot, many of them, be carried out without political action, involving much public discussion, parliamentary parties and parliamentary debates, the passing of laws, government decisions on foreign policy, on armaments, on finance, and a host of suchlike matters. Moreover, many “services” essential to the life of the community, such as education, hospitals, coal, transport are passing out of the hands of voluntary organizations into public—which means political—control. In many departments of activity the voluntary organization has been, in times past, the Church. As Bishop Creighton once remarked, when the Church has made a success of something the State takes it over and calls it reform! What then is to be the attitude of the Christian and the Christian Church towards such political action? It is to be hoped that the old cry that “the Church must have nothing to do with politics” is not often heard nowadays. In a sense the Church has everything to do with

politics. But on what governing principles should it think and act? To that question—which cannot be ignored in a book which seeks to describe “every-day religion”—this chapter will endeavour to suggest, however tentatively, some answer.

I

Our Lord Himself laid the chief stress on inward motive and personal character; when a man once asked Him to intervene in a dispute about property, He answered, in effect, “get rid of the covetous spirit and act as a good neighbour, and such problems will be on the way to solving themselves.” But this insistence that His Kingdom is to be based on service and love does not mean that political affairs, or problems of government, had no interest for Him. He, as we, had to live His life inside a particular political situation; and His famous saying about giving Caesar his due (St. Matthew xxii, 21) was clearly a counsel to Jews to accept loyally the Roman rule, thus implying His own recognition that in contemporary Jewry the rule of the Roman was probably best. Moreover He seems to have been Himself an exemplary taxpayer; from which it has rightly been concluded that one mark of the true Christian is the cheerfulness with which he pays his taxes. But indeed the whole argument of this book is that Jesus Christ, by His life and teaching, by the very fact of His Incarnation, gives us a religion which is for every day, and supplies the clue for right action in all our human circumstances.

“Politics” derive from “policies.” What, it may rightly be asked, is the main policy, the over-riding aim, which governs our own nation in these confused times as to its internal and external affairs? We are trying to see our way through the dark wood of revolutionary change—a revolution typically British because it is peaceful and unspectacular; but as we grope along is there any “master-light

of all our seeing"? It can surely be claimed, with some confidence, that our Christian tradition, stretching back now for some 1,400 years, is by no means dead, and that our public life, and the major policies of modern governments, are at any rate very largely influenced by principles which are consonant with that tradition. Apart from such valuable and public recognition of our Christian heritage as is evidenced in the Coronation Service, Prayers in the Houses of Parliament, Mayor's Sundays, National Days of Prayer, and so forth, there are signs also of an instinctive if inarticulate sense of God in our midst, a sense which lies largely beneath the surface and only intermittently expresses itself in church going. As Professor Brogan has pointed out, "though the Church of England may only be the Church that the majority of English people stay away from, they want it to be there to stay away from."

How far this vague and inarticulate religion is being, or might be, transmuted into a more definite Christian discipleship and Church membership, is a question with which the Churches are grappling, and which at this moment must be left on one side. What is clear is that this sense of a Christian heritage, and this lip-service to Christian principles, could and should find a much more definite formulation and expression in our national plans and policies. During the war we were certainly sustained by the conviction that our real aim in that titanic struggle was to conserve and perpetuate a Christian civilization. But since the war this ultimate aim has been somewhat obscured. There is a perfect spate of planning; but planning—for what? Economic security, educational opportunity, personal freedom, peace with our neighbours—after all these things we are feverishly striving, but with what major end in view? For these things are means, not ends. The Nazis knew, and the Russians know, what kind of life they want; what kind of life do we want? If we are true to our highest traditions, and to the deepest and truest instincts of our people, I

should hazard the answer that our aim is a common life where God is recognized and His laws obeyed; where men and nations live the life of good neighbours, and where each human personality has a reasonable opportunity to achieve its fullest development in the widest possible fellowship.

If that is really what we are after, how far is it being embodied in the actual working political institutions of our nation and Empire? Again I would reply that our political set-up is an approximation towards what might fairly be called a Christian democracy; which is really an attempt to build up the national life on a basis of freedom; in Abraham Lincoln's famous words it aims at government of the people, by the people, for the people. Democracy does not regard the people as an inert mass to be ordered about by a small body of superiors as if they had no will of their own; rather it aims at the formation of a common mind, and seeks to base government on the general will of the whole nation. To this end it has a representative parliament, elected by the whole nation, and a government responsible to parliament and the nation; moreover an alternative government is always available if claimed and supported by a majority of the citizens—hence the significance of the phrase "His Majesty's Opposition." It has been pointed out that "No government can be long secure without a formidable opposition," and it was in recognition of the value of these arrangements that the "Leader of the Opposition," and therefore alternative Prime Minister, was in 1937 granted an official salary of £2,000 a year. It must be a strange sight for the foreign observer—every British government paying its chief critic handsomely for his criticism! Nor does any government possess uncontrolled power, because certain fundamental liberties of the individual are regarded as sacrosanct—freedom of speech and writing, freedom of the Press, freedom of association, freedom of worship, freedom from imprisonment except after open trial in accordance with acknowledged law.

The system is not perfect—what political system is? Its imperfections and failures need watching; there is, for instance, much less economic than political freedom, and an ignorant and apathetic electorate may too easily allow the State to absorb into itself all the “centres of power” which inevitably emerge in any organized community. And we must be sure that all our “planning” does not sap the instincts of individual initiative and responsibility. The basic problem of every government is how to look after the welfare of the community with the minimum of interference with the freedom of the individual. Aristotle said long ago that the purpose of politics was to provide the condition of the good life. “Probably,” comments the Archbishop of York in his recent notable book on the Church of England, “the greatest political service which the Church will render in the near future to the people will be through its insistence on the value and freedom of each individual, against the demands of the industrial machine and the omni-competent State.”¹ “It is unlikely,” as is cogently pointed out in a recent pamphlet,² that “the obvious forms of Dictatorship prevalent in other countries will be set up in this country. But there is a form dangerous to us to-day. It is one of excessive State control with its attendant reliance on increasing bureaucracy. Planning by the State should be legitimately used to simplify life, to lift unnecessary burdens and so increase freedom. But there are boundaries beyond which such planning and control should never be allowed to pass. To fix the point at which planning ceases to liberate, and becomes stifling to the best in man, is an urgent necessity and must be considered and fixed while the nation’s life is still in the flux of change. The fact that a considerable number of people are willing to hand over more of the nation’s life, without being exercised in their minds about it, is no criterion of rightness, but of mental and moral

¹ *The Claims of the Church of England*, p. 220.

² *Christianity and Democracy*, published by the I.C.F. (2d.).

inertia. A sure sign that a danger-point to Democracy is reached is when the Government becomes in the minds of the people 'THEY'—a curious entity like Providence from whom all good should flow—and stands over against 'WE,' the people. So long as this attitude of mind exists there can be no conscious sense of, or belief in, Democracy as a vital reality."

It is obvious that the kind of democracy in which we in this country believe, and which we endeavour to practise, must be based on a wide and free fellowship of persons containing plenty of the ingredients of trust, tolerance and fair play. Such a community has nothing in common with the regimented fellowship of the totalitarian State; indeed a unity created and maintained by force is the merest caricature of real fellowship. But in other matters also it is only too clear that the totalitarian states, whether of the Nazi or Communist variety, recognize no restraints of law or morality, trample ruthlessly on elementary human rights and liberties, and in fact have no use for the basic values of European civilization. There is indeed on the moral level an irreconcilable antagonism between democracy and totalitarianism concerning the ultimate meaning of life. It is not surprising that, like Lincoln exclaiming that America could not remain half slave and half free, some thoughtful minds are wondering whether there is much chance for world peace as long as one-sixth of the earth's surface "remains under totalitarian slavery in an intellectual black-out."

No sane man proposes that these fundamental differences should be resolved by war—an atomic war in which, plainly enough, no group, system or people could possibly "win," but all would go down in some final, unimaginable catastrophe. All the same, it is not easy to see how democracy can live with these other systems save in a condition of acute discomfort; and it is to be feared that totalitarian tyrants are tough fellows to convert. For the Christian,

genuinely anxious to unearth anything good in other people and other political systems, and eager also to discover any sign of a Divine purpose in contemporary history, the dilemma is a real one. As a recent number of the *Christian News-Letter* (No. 275) pertinently asks, "How may we combine open-mindedness towards communist Russia, an infinite readiness to learn and determination to understand, with a whole-hearted commitment to the service and defence of a free society? Are not the two attitudes psychologically irreconcilable? If through an academic remoteness from real life or through a naïve simplicity and blindness to the power of evil, we fail to recognize in time the threat to a free society, we may awake to find ourselves the victims of an irremovable tyranny. That there are power-loving and unscrupulous men in positions of power in democracies as well as in totalitarian regimes it would be absurd to deny. But where public opinion can freely express itself and the rights of an opposition are acknowledged, their actions are subject to restraints and there is always the possibility of driving them from power."

II

If the description and analysis of political institutions and practices which have been offered in the first section of this chapter are in any way correct, then it would seem that the Christian and the Christian Church are not merely concerned in these matters, but have to shoulder inescapable responsibilities towards them. As we saw in the last chapter, when considering the "Industrial Revolution" and its consequences, this sense of responsibility has been tardy in arriving. Hitler is reported to have said, in so many words, "Let the clergy busy themselves with the other world; I will attend to this."

One of Low's famous cartoons, which appeared just after

the late Archbishop William Temple had been addressing a company of bankers and eminent financiers, pictures the Archbishop making as if to pass through a gate into a field, and his path is blocked by the famous Colonel Blimp, in banker's guise, brandishing a stout stick and shouting at the Archbishop, "Hi! you're trespassing here, this is private property!" On the same subject another paper had a cartoon showing a city man exclaiming to a colleague: "I wonder how the Archbishop would like it if you and I went round christening people?" As to this, I should like to quote Mr. Maurice Reckitt's extremely pertinent comment in his excellent little book *The Christian in Politics*. "No doubt," he writes, "this (the cartoon) did represent what some people in the City felt about those observations of the Primate: an impression that their legitimate functions were being invaded. What they, and others like them elsewhere, failed to see was that money is not something the manipulation of which can be isolated and dealt with according to purely financial conventions. The issue and the control of money has to be related to the purposes for which a community truly exists, and to see that it is so related is in fact a concern of religion. Once that relationship is rightly established, and so long as it is maintained, the Church's responsibility ends, and the Churchman, as such, has no more justification for concerning himself with what goes on in the bank parlour than the banker would have in inquiring into what may happen in the vestry."

Granted then that the Christian Church cannot and should not accept any such "hands off" warning in political matters, in what way, we may next ask, should it make its influence felt? What should be the nature of its contacts with politics and politicians? There is of course, first of all and all the time, what may be called its general and indirect influence. If the Church's main business in the world is to "make Christians," then clearly some of the Christians thus made ought to be, and not infrequently are,

men and women who attain to places of high responsibility in government circles, in the Civil Service, and in the Forces, where they are in a position to bring Christian principles to bear upon matters of public policy; always of course, and inevitably, remembering that the whole art of politics—an art for the Christian full of frustrations and disappointments—is to do, not the ideal best, but the best that can be done in the circumstances. May such men and women never be lacking! What our nation owes to them in the past is incalculable, and what we should do without them in the future is unthinkable.

One obvious way in which the Church can, and to a certain extent does, influence political decisions is by means of the Bishops in the House of Lords; twenty-five Diocesan Bishops, always including both Archbishops and the Bishops of London, Durham and Winchester, have the right to sit in the Upper House. No Bishop, indeed no Churchman, can think without shame of the use sometimes made of those seats in early days, when occasionally Bishops were to be found among the peers who sought to block the path to reform. This failure should not be allowed to obscure from modern eyes the strength of the religious movement throughout the Victorian era, and the good work of numbers of clergy and laity in the Church of England in those days. And the House of Lords itself, as time went on, witnessed the constructive statesmanship of a whole line of Archbishops—Sumner, Longley, Tait, Benson, Frederick Temple, in Victorian times, followed by Randall Davidson, Lang, William Temple, Garbett, Fisher, in the present century. Other Bishops have frequently made their contributions, in the many questions which arise where moral issues are involved. Reference might well be made to the present Bishop of Chichester's speeches in the House, pleading for a truly humanitarian treatment of refugees and exiles and displaced persons and prisoners, together with the many thousands of others on the continent of Europe

doomed to conditions of misery and helplessness, and urging that we in this country should face and discharge our own moral responsibilities towards these needy folk. Nor do such pleas fall on deaf ears in Houses of Parliament where the great Christian traditions still retain much of their ancient force.

It goes without saying that the Church, as is its plain duty, is always at the business of influencing public opinion in a hundred different ways, in the press, by books and pamphlets and by meetings of all sorts, as well as in more personal and unobtrusive channels; nor is there reason to doubt that some at any rate of this activity has its effect in the political sphere, moving the minds of voters, of M.P.s, and of others in official positions, central or local. It is not unreasonable to claim that the late Archbishop Temple, by his writings and public meetings, as well as by his speeches in the House of Lords, exercised a wise and stimulating influence on recent social legislation. A few years ago he and the present Archbishop of York, Dr. Garbett, held a series of great meetings in London, Birmingham, Leicester and Edinburgh—I myself was with him at the Birmingham meeting—for the express purpose of affirming "the right and duty of the Church to declare its judgment upon social facts and social movements and to lay down principles which should govern the ordering of society." From a variety of angles he bade men see the supremacy in all respects of the human person. "It has always been recognized, of course," he said, "that the Christian religion has its message for the life of the individual within the framework of society. We are concerned to insist that it also has its message for the ordering of society itself, and that the social structure, as well as the lives of individuals living within that structure, is subject to criticism in the light of Christian principles."

A worthy and significant sequel to such meetings has recently taken place in Oxford, when a meeting organized

by senior and junior members of the University, many of them ex-Servicemen, was attended by some 2,000 people, including representatives of many religious bodies, trade unions, political parties and business organizations. The meeting enthusiastically passed a resolution urging Church leaders "to formulate, for the help of the Government, a *positive Christian aim which would govern our nation's policy*, discussions and behaviour in all matters connected with our responsibilities for Germany."

But the question may well be asked, indeed ought to be asked, What about the Church and *party* politics? The party system is an essential and valuable part of our democratic institutions; but what should be the attitude and action of the Christian man in the midst of the keen, and sometimes bitter, strife of political parties? Let it be said at once—this at least is the present writer's view—that it is neither feasible nor right to attempt to form a *Christian* party as such, chiefly because it is obvious that there are sincere Christians in all the major political parties; nor do such Christians feel that they have in any way compromised their faith by entering public life as members of a party. There is no justification for Christians to stand aloof, complaining that politics are "dirty" or "corrupt"; on that score one might as well attempt to contract out of life altogether, for there is no field of secular life which is not without its tensions and its call for difficult moral decisions. Moreover, Christian political action, except in rare instances, always involves co-operation with non-Christians, and party discipline as it exists in this country does not as a rule impose any greater restraint on the conscience of individuals than any group must if it is to be united for effective common action.¹

The complaint about "politics in the pulpit" has lost much of its force since clergy and ministers have on the whole learnt more sense in dealing with these issues, and

¹ Cf. *Christian News-Letter Supplement* No. 270.

since the old and common identification of Anglicans with Conservatism and Nonconformists with Labour has largely ceased to be valid. Nevertheless clergy and ministers should, as it seems to me, carefully refrain from using their pulpits or any other platform for advocating particular party programmes. As a private citizen the parson may, indeed should, use his vote and his personal influence in support of the party of his choice; but as a representative of any part of the Christian Church he should surely, in his public capacity, do what he can to set forth the general moral issues, and show the relevance of Christian standards and values to the actual political situation, and exhort his hearers then to give their votes to whatever party they think is most likely to translate those standards into action. The secret of all true progress lies in a right blending of change with continuity; some men, temperamentally, are more concerned to preserve what the past has bequeathed, while others are equally anxious to achieve some greatly needed change; and this fundamental disposition will go far to determine a man's political attitude and his alignment with any particular political party. "What we need," wisely remarks the Bishop of London in a recent book,¹ "is a mixture of courage and patience in about equal proportions: courage to grasp firmly the nettle of necessary change, and patience to ensure that in the process nothing of abiding value is lost."

III

At the beginning of this chapter it was suggested that the general way of life with its appropriate political set-up which we in this country, our history and instincts being what they are, desire to follow, might appropriately be called the way of Christian democracy. The remainder of

¹ *God and Goodness*, p. 174.

the chapter may therefore be devoted to a brief consideration of some of the factors and conditions which can make such democracy work. It may well be that on the continent of Europe, and conceivably elsewhere in the world, there are people, and even nations, halting between two opinions about their political future. Germany, in particular, has been described as a political vacuum (it is true to add that it reveals also a social and spiritual vacuum). Nazism has been destroyed and discredited. Russian Communism is strong, and eager to extend. The United States, the great Western democracy, is at present swinging to the "right" and away from planning and controls. Great Britain, with our Commonwealth, enjoys just now an enormous prestige; and if the nations are able to see that our form of democracy can rescue society from chaos, give it just what is necessary in planning and controls, and still leave men free to live their lives in their own way, they may perchance note and act upon that lesson, and so affect for good the whole future history of the world.

There is no doubt a long way to go before our "Christian democracy" in any way responds to our ideals; it must become both more Christian and more democratic. We need—as all this book is trying to show—more living Christianity in our midst; we need a better educated people. When it is recalled that, up to now, about half our population have been leaving school at fourteen, and thereafter have done very little reading and hardly any real thinking, it is surprising that our political system works as well as it does. Lord Baldwin used to say that it is going to be a race between education and catastrophe. No thoughtful Christian has any excuse for not understanding the elements of the democratic system under which we live, and the principles of the political machine whereby decisions are reached and put into effect. Those do a disservice to democracy who speak or write contemptuously of proceedings in Parliament. No unprejudiced person can deny that

our British Parliament remains the best institution of its kind in the world; for instance the question hour in the House of Commons is one of the finest pieces of democratic machinery ever invented. But the usefulness of Parliament does depend in large measure on the electorate generally taking pains to know and to understand what their legislators are doing. It is somewhat ominous to note the usual character of the front-page news in the cheap press; proceedings in Parliament get a poor look in by the side of Hollywood, the film stars and the football pools. On the other hand those men and women who do attempt to take a real interest in political affairs might well from time to time vary their favourite newspaper, and substitute the *Herald* for the *Telegraph*, or vice versa! Moreover, groups of Christians, or indeed any groups who are trying to serve the community, might well from time to time establish personal contacts with the elected representatives of the people and talk over with them those matters of policy which at the time are being considered at higher government levels. Such consultation is, surely more useful than sending deputations or lodging protests *after* the policy has been decided by parliament or cabinet.

Again, democracy—indeed any modern political system—must of necessity involve planning. For better or worse—and attention has already been drawn to some of its dangers—we have to live in a planned society. In this matter Christians and the Christian Church are, obviously, very closely concerned; when plans for the community are afoot then, to use the common colloquialism, the Church ought to be “on the ground floor.” Partly because, as already urged in this book, the sectional planning will go wrong unless there is a master-plan, a general pattern of life into which the various bits and pieces may be appropriately fitted. And it is specially important that the Church should do all in its power to penetrate the life of the community in the new towns which are at present (1946-7) being

planned, some of them on very ambitious scales. There is an evident desire to-day to avoid any repetition of the "formless slabs of housing" which littered the land after the first world war. People, and planners, want to build real communities; but, as Christians at any rate know, you cannot just build communities as you build houses; they have to grow, built up spiritually by a creative spirit moving in the common mind and over-riding the inevitable tendencies to selfishness and sectionalism.

There is one point about these new towns which needs special emphasis; and here I cannot do better than quote once again from one of the excellent *Christian News-Letters* (No. 273): "These new towns are not just local housing projects. They are an attempt by Parliament, acting on behalf of the nation, to solve a large social problem in a new way. These new towns will be show places attracting visitors and experts not only from this country but from overseas. They are the concern of the whole nation, and equally their religious and social life is the concern of the *whole* Church in the nation. If the Churches merely reproduce the pattern of church life as it is elsewhere and fail to grasp this opportunity imaginatively and together, their failure will not be hidden in a corner. It will be a spectacular failure. For this reason planning of sites in new towns should be the subject on which church leaders take expert advice and then give a substantial lead. This matter is of too great moment to be left to local committees not even specially constituted for the purpose."

If the Churches are to make an effective contribution to these new communities they will have to achieve a high degree of co-operative working. For if the town councils are going to have to consult each denomination separately on matters affecting the life of the community they will tend to leave them out of it. Here is one more of the converging considerations which ought to shake the Churches out of their terrible acquiescence in their disunited state, driving

them now to keen co-operation in these practical issues, and stimulating them to use such immediate co-operation as a prelude and preparation for a much closer integration of their spiritual life and heritage in the time to come.

Another essential factor in "making democracy work" is a keen and widespread sense of civic duty. Reference has already been made to the duty of the ordinary citizen to take a sustained and intelligent interest in public affairs. This duty is perhaps most immediate, and in a sense easiest, in matters of local government. Good Christian men and women, with the advantages of some education and culture, ought to be more ready than they sometimes appear to be to stand for election to local councils, urban and rural, and to face willingly the rough and tumble of participation in local government in order to see that the Christian values do not go by default; similarly Christian voters should do all in their power, by precept and example, to stem the all too frequent apathy which characterizes local elections. Again, the Church through its clergy and other members should take pains to make friendly contacts with civil servants and trained social workers, who nowadays often discharge functions which used to be carried out by the clergy themselves and other voluntary workers. My own experience is that such contacts are invariably welcomed from the civic side. And here is an interesting testimony from the Bishop of Sheffield, Dr. L. S. Hunter, speaking of his experiences when he was an archdeacon on Tyneside: "The readiness," he reports, "of such workers and of statutory officials to meet any advances from our side half-way is rather humbling. I have never been refused by any Town Clerk, Director of Education, Medical Officer of Health, Manager of Employment Exchange, P.A.C. or Social Welfare Officer a request that they should talk to groups of clergy or show them their work in being. The staff of the Ministry of Labour on Tyneside once gave the junior clergy a full insight into the working of an Exchange,

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transporting them to see various Instructional Centres, providing meals, and at the end of it regarding our visit not as a tiresome intrusion but as a compliment which gave them real pleasure. They were gratified that the Church through its clergy should wish to understand their job and should discover how much devotion they put into it. Such human contacts, quite apart from the information they bring to us, are very worth while."¹

Besides such semi-official contacts, the Church does well to encourage, through its members, all kinds of unofficial, voluntary groupings and associations—cultural, educational, recreational, religious—which are, so to speak, intermediate between the individual and the State. Such groupings, so characteristic of our British way of life, are the very salt of the community, and form a kind of seed ground in which our democratic units of Government take root and flourish. Moreover, local government offers a wide field of service, not only on the various local councils, but also in the carrying out of statutory services and voluntary agencies of community life, such as public assistance, nursery schools, child and maternity clinics, women's institutes, youth clubs, citizens' advice bureaux—to name only a few. The Church should encourage men and women to find a Christian vocation in such jobs as those connected with the administration of justice or the care of juvenile delinquents; or again in the work of housing, police, sanitation, roads, public parks, libraries.²

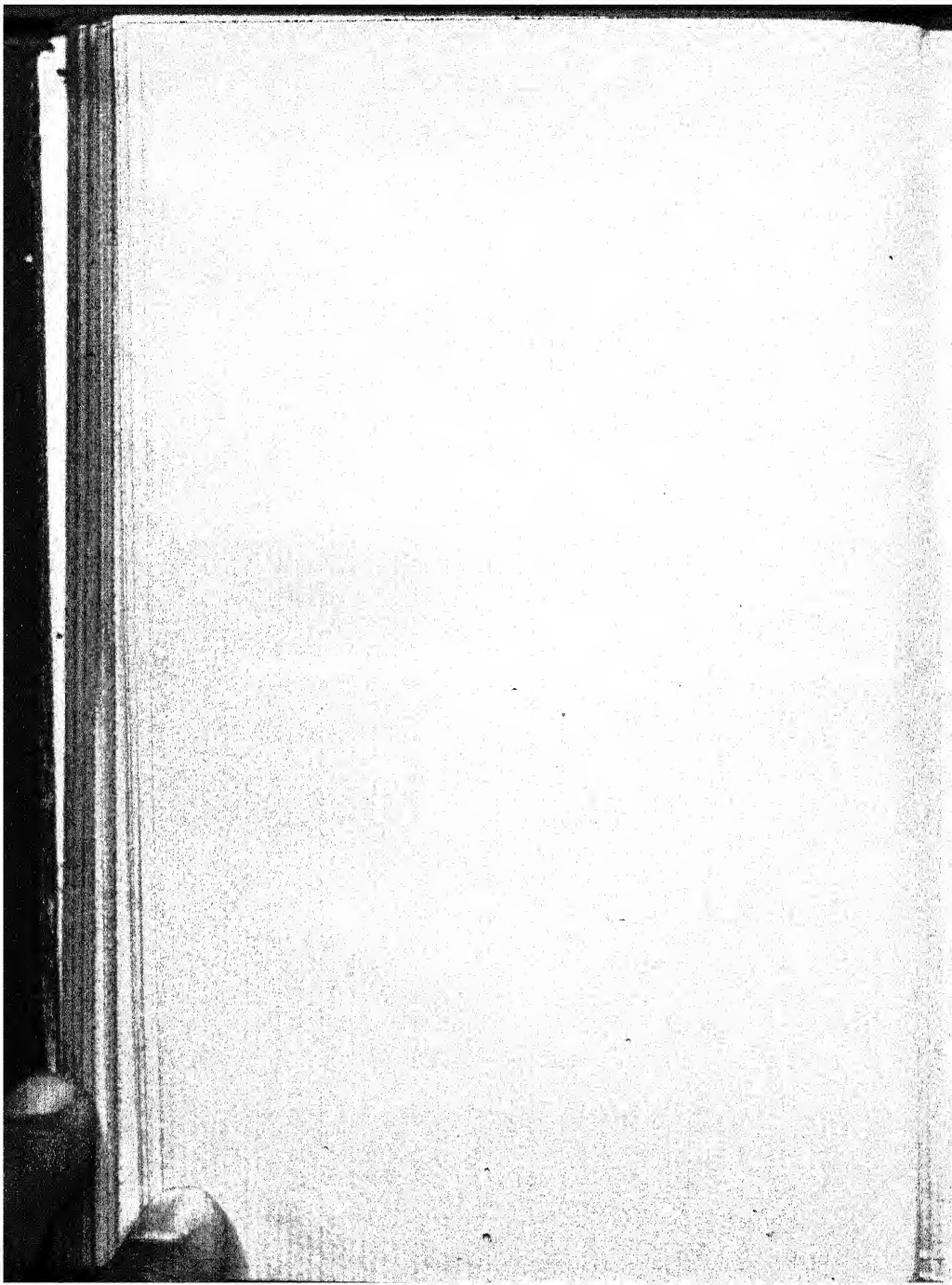
But whatever else the Christian Church may do or attempt in helping to "make democracy work," it must all the time keep on at its main task of providing men and women who will quietly, steadfastly, unobtrusively get the spirit of Christ working inside the whole democratic machine in all its parts. The very essence of what Jesus

¹ *Let Us Go Forward*, Bishop of Sheffield's Charge, p. 27.

² See further useful suggestions in *The Way of a Christian Citizen* by E. C. Urwin, an admirable book to which I am indebted for some of the thoughts in this chapter.

told His followers to do, and in the main they caught the idea, was that they were to be sure to live "*better than the rules*," to do more than would normally be expected of them or legally claimed from them. His famous saying about "going the second mile" is peculiarly apposite here. "Suppose," He said to His disciples (I use a paraphrase of the old version), "suppose you do love those who love you in return: there is nothing very meritorious about that—people who make no profession of religion do as much! If you are on friendly terms only with people of your own set that is merely ordinary good-nature; heathen folk do as much as that. You are to be God's children to all the world, your goodness is to be of your heavenly Father's quality and stamp."

The plain truth is that institutions are what men and women make them. The best institutions, the wisest schemes, will go wrong if they are worked by bad people. But if there can be enough men and women, at the top and among the rank and file, to breathe a spirit of faith and fellowship into all our complex and imperfect political and industrial system, then "Christian democracy" may yet have a vital place in God's good purpose for our world.



V

Ye ought . . . to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

ACTS xx, 35.

Don't forget good works and all the duty of sharing with others, for that is the kind of sacrifice that pleases God.

HEBREWS xiii, 16 (paraphrase by Dr. J. W. C. Wand)

Freely ye have received, freely give. ST. MATTHEW x, 8.

Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee. PROVERBS iii, 27, 28.

For every guest thy heart receiveth, the Lord Himself doth open in thy heart another room. It is as if Christ handed to us Himself the key of each newly discovered chamber, saying, "Let us together love to the best end the dear soul who enters here." . . . As love grows we discover further and further the capacity of the house of our soul. There is no limit to the number or kind of "these My brethren" to whom we give the freedom of this city without walls. ANON.

A gentleman is a man who always tries to put in a little more than he takes out. BERNARD SHAW

CHAPTER V

SHARING LIFE

AN attempt has been made, in the previous chapters, to grasp something of the proportions and perspective of the greatest of all human problems—that of living together, in the same street, the same town, the same world. In order to see it the better we have stood back from the picture, viewing it in a somewhat detached, impersonal fashion. But, for anyone who wants to do something with life, such an external view of human need must always be a preliminary to personal action. The critics in the clubs and advisers from arm-chairs illustrate an inveterate human complacency which likes to know, or seems to know, all about a problem or a battle without personally plunging into the fray. Such complacency is first cousin to the facility with which most men like to generalize, usually from very slender premises. It is, for instance, so easy, and so fallacious, to think or talk about “men in the mass.” There are no such people. “No man,” an acute observer has remarked, “is a member of the mob to himself; everyone leaves himself out of his generalizations.”¹ That is common sense, the lack of which would go far to vitiate any approach to this pressing problem of human living together. Nobody stands outside this complex business; we are all in it, with joint and several responsibility for the evils that beset us; “we are the social problem,” is the inevitable conclusion of any group of serious-minded people who try to face this question in all its bearings. And we, writer and readers of these words, are, each of us personally, deeply implicated; each of us has his or her personal contribution to make to the building up of a human society which shall approximate more closely

¹ A. Clutton Brock, *Studies in Christianity*, p. 165.

to the ideal of God's Kingdom. How exactly are we going to make it? Something has already been said, in the first four chapters, about the work of personal Christianity in transforming the world of society and industry and politics. In this chapter an attempt is made to elucidate one particular aspect of the Christian contribution.

I

To the question, "What am I to do?" the Christian answer is quite plain. It may be stated in three words: "Share your life." It has been already urged that the attaining of life and the sharing of it are two integral parts of one and the same process. It is the great paradox of Christianity, again and again insisted on by Jesus Christ and verified by all true experience, that you only realize life in sharing it; "life" and "love" are almost interchangeable terms.

Now it must be conceded that, to care more for giving than for getting involves, for most of us, a very drastic change in one's point of view. But such a "conversion" of motive and mental attitude is precisely what takes place when anyone has the humility and the wisdom—I had almost said the common sense—to get his ideas from Jesus Christ. For no one can have any contact with Jesus Christ without making two discoveries, discoveries which rapidly affect the whole of his thinking and living. One is that the eternal God does really care about every single human being; they all matter to Him as individual personalities. And if we each of us, severally, are objects of God's concern, then clearly we stand in a very wonderful relationship to one another, as being all of us within the magic circle of the love of God. The other discovery—perhaps it would be truer to call it experience—which follows hard upon the heels of the first, is that such a knowledge of God and such

an attitude towards men must, and does, involve a shifting of life's centre of gravity. It means a permanent displacement of self from the throne of being. It entails a drastic alteration in one's sense of values. It means, not a contracting or limiting or mutilating of life, but a radiant, passionate certainty that the fullness of life is only to be found in sharing and service and sacrifice. How indeed could it be otherwise with a religion which has the Cross at its very centre, which tells of a God "who spared not His own Son but gave Him up for us all"? "Shall the disciple be above his master?" Are we to attempt to work out our vocation and destiny on easier and safer lines than those which were good enough for Jesus? A simple fisherman once said to a friend of mine, "I never calls God *Lord*." "Why not?" asked my friend. "Because lords always have a lot of things and keep them and enjoy them; but God gives everything He's got."

This fundamental thing in Christian experience cannot be too emphatically set forth; for it is so easily obscured on the one side, by that type of ultra-individualistic thought, not yet defunct, which sees "salvation" as a kind of private security from the dangers of this world and the next; and, on the other side, by an exaggerated asceticism which views sacrifice as an end in itself. The essential thing in "salvation" is that the man is saved from a life of selfishness into a life of love. "Whatever spiritual experiences a man may have gone through, if he is not delivered from his self-regarding impulses, then he is not converted to the Christian position."¹ "I sometimes think," says another Christian of to-day, "that Christ barely recognizes any sin except selfishness; and it is just there we are so utterly different, for selfishness is about the one sin we don't recognize." It is not so much a question of a conscious, almost artificial, "mortifying" of selfish instincts; it is rather that, in the company of Christ, you come to care for something not

¹ A. H. Gray, *The Christian Adventure*, p. 29.

yourself, more than you care for yourself, to forget yourself altogether in the absorbing interests of His plans and His cause. The question He always asks of those who follow Him is what they are doing to share their life, and His sternest condemnation falls on those who *fail to share it*; those who, confronted by opportunities to help, thoughtlessly and uselessly, "pass by on the other side."¹ Mazzini is said to have remarked to a friend, on the subject of a religious reputation: "When I hear a man called 'good,' I ask 'Whom then has he saved?'"

II

The genuine article in Christian unselfishness is not to be confused with a feeble, flabby sentiment of goodwill which never gets itself effectively expressed in action, a "love" which is directed towards everybody in general but does nothing for anybody in particular. A story is told of an artist busy in his studio and thinking hard while he painted. The subject of the picture on his easel was a poor, thinly-clad woman, hugging a small child to her breast, and sorely battered by storm and tempest. Suddenly he flung down his brush, exclaiming to himself, "Why don't I go myself and help such folk, instead of just painting pictures of them?" He was as good as his word, and Alfred Tucker spent the rest of his life in the mission field, the last twenty-five years of it as Bishop of Uganda.

I am far from suggesting that the mission field provides the only, or even the best, channel for Christian service; but I would venture to try and indicate, as plainly as possible, how life may be shared without any change of home or calling. We saw in the previous chapters that there is a certain broad yet true distinction between "life" and its

¹ See St. Matthew xxv, 31-46; St. Luke x, 25-37, xvi, 19-31, xviii, 18-24; and see St. Matthew xxi, 30, for a vivid picture of well-intentioned uselessness.

setting, between the essence of living and the conditions of living, between true spiritual vitality and the material environment which may choke it or cherish it. The Christian is called upon to share what he has of both. Take the external things first. Who has not read stories of Antarctic explorers making forced marches on very meagre rations, when the food, at meal-time, is carefully divided up, and it is a point of honour with each man not to have a crumb more than his fair share? Now in this world, in a nation or a community, there are a certain amount of material things available, the things that make life reasonably satisfactory—food, clothes, houses and so on, and the means to obtain a sufficiency of leisure and of rational, healthy enjoyment. So long as there are vast numbers of fellow human beings, especially of fellow-citizens, who have not got anything like their fair share of these things, may it not be that a Christian—a true follower of Jesus and a true lover of his fellow-men—should make it a point of honour to refuse to have more than his fair share, and, when there are shortages, to accept rationing with a glad mind? I do not doubt, indeed I know, that there are men and women who do possess a good deal more than their share, who are nevertheless sincere followers of Jesus Christ and endeavour to act as stewards of their wealth; it is not for one who is only a beginner in the school of Christ to judge them or to try and lay down the law for them. And, further, I appreciate the very real difficulty of determining what is a "fair share," and the still graver difficulty, for the wealthy, of anything in the nature of an individual transfer of money either to other individuals or to the community; though in these days of war and post-war taxation the problem is largely solved for them! Nevertheless, allowing for all such qualifications and despite every difficulty, it would seem to be the duty of an ordinary Christian (who "means business" by his Christianity) to content himself with such a standard of living as he can conscientiously reconcile with Christ's law

of love. "We are polite enough," says one who has earned the right to speak straightly about these things,¹ "we are polite enough to surrender our seat in a 'bus to any weaker person, but rarely our seat in the saddle of wealth and privilege. Convention gives us each our place and advantage, and we have tried to argue that God meant us each to keep our seats in the world's omnibus, trusting that He would make other people's standing and pushing congenial to them. In that great tract of living we have abandoned the idea of loving our neighbour as ourself, covering ourselves forsooth with the theological defence of caring more for our brother's soul than for his body."

It may be that not all Christians are called to this adventure of "voluntary equality" in the standard of living; though it can hardly be doubted that our social system stands in sore need of some such practical demonstration of Christian brotherhood. In any case, within the framework of life as we find it, there are hundreds of different ways in which those who want to share things can find ways to do so, ways that range from the myriad little details of daily intercourse to participation in large and complex efforts to make the means of life available for all. Every man who means to share and to serve will, each morning, take a fresh look at his ideal—"not to be ministered unto but to minister" . . . "last of all and servant of all" . . . "more blessed to give than to receive"; and he will look at his Master, too, to take in a new stock of hope and courage; and then he will plunge recklessly and cheerily into a day of "sharing." Grumpiness at breakfast is a gloomy privilege he will leave to the pagans. In all the give-and-take of family life he will do plenty of giving, and that, too, without any of the rather priggish, obtrusive unselfishness which makes other people uncomfortable. "Let us love one another and laugh" is a capital motto for family life; as a savour of selfless giving a jest is better than a text.

¹ Malcolm Spencer, *The Social Function of the Church*, p. 72.

As Robert Louis Stevenson said, "A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note." And then in all the traffic of common intercourse, in the street, in the 'bus, in the shop, in the office, in the work-room or on the playing-fields, it will be for such a man a never-ending delight, like a little secret game played with himself, to devise all sorts of ways in which to carry out his "sharing" scheme. Here is a true instance, from the world of commerce, of Christian sharing. A young man had been in a responsible position with a firm of large timber merchants. Presently he left and started in the business for himself, to a considerable extent in opposition to his old employer. In the very midst, however, of a very flourishing period, with many contracts in hand, a serious fire destroyed the young man's stock of timber. He was faced by the most pressing anxiety, for it meant possible ruin. Just at that time he saw, one day, his old master coming towards his office. He said afterwards that he could have hated him, because he thought he was come to gloat over his misfortunes. But it was as a friend that he came. He said, "I know that you are bound to supply timber to your customers by a certain date; and this unfortunate fire will make it impossible for you to do this. But my yard is at your disposal. You may have what timber you need and pay me at your convenience." But the kind of things that can be done by those who mean to do them are legion, and quite beyond the compass of any telling. And the opportunities to give come to all who look for them, whether they have much or little of this world's goods. Indeed it is proverbial that those who have less are the more generous in sharing it, often with a truly beautiful delicacy of perception. I heard of an old lady who lived in a wee house in the country who was found planting her best roses in the back garden. When reasoned with she nodded her head towards an upper window in a small house, and said, "I'm going to put some geraniums here too. I know they'll be almost out of sight of our

house, but there's a woman sits all day sewing at that window, so tired-looking, and maybe the flowers will brighten her up a bit."

Neither home-life nor working-life, with all the various relationships which each involves, will exhaust the opportunities for sharing life. All sorts of avenues of service open up before the man who is in earnest about "every-day religion." To insert a lever under the mountainous mass of world misery and need, and raise it even a few inches, will demand all the concentrated, co-ordinated energy of faith and love that any given generation is able to supply. And in this organized effort it is for every Christian man and woman to find their place and do their part. The missionary enterprise, at home and overseas, the various branches of social service, the opportunities to help in rebuilding lives shattered by the war, especially on the continent of Europe, the many forms of "Church work"—all these activities are integral parts of the one great endeavour to bring "life" to those who lack it, and in all of them there is an increasing demand for an unlimited number of willing helpers. Men and women are wanted who will do small things—yes and dull things!—with a large heart and for the sake of a great purpose. There are plenty of people, someone has said, who will cheerfully die for a cause, but if you ask them to teach a Sunday School class they will go away in a rage! In bringing this section of our subject to a close, three practical suggestions, obvious indeed but sometimes neglected, may be humbly proffered to any who are trying to share life, through organized effort or in other ways. First, keep all relationships very human, and free from the blight of officialism or professionalism. Secondly, develop the knack of seeing the good in other people, and building on it.¹ Thirdly, find the way to make real friends with some family

¹ In personal relationships "there is only one attitude compatible with self-respect; namely, to find out and hoard like grains of gold all that is fine and generous and lovable in others, and do our best to find something in ourselves worthy of being matched with it." (E. F. Benson, *The Osbornes*.)

or some person who lives and works in some other social stratum than that in which you have been born and bred. It is a plan which opens the eyes, and helps you to know what "fellowship" may really mean.

III

What has been said thus far about "sharing" is, however, only half the tale. For, in the last resort, of all that any man can give that which is most worth giving is *himself*. He is summoned to share not only the husk but the kernel of living, not only that which can be seen and handled and measured, but that inner life of the spirit, that fount of true being, which, however imponderable, invisible, indefinable, is none the less the most vital and precious thing he has. I can conceive of a man who has a strict conscience about his money and material possessions and who is a laborious supporter of philanthropic enterprises, and yet somehow the total amount of his real contribution to the common good remains small. I can imagine another, with next to nothing of material worth to give, and hindered, perhaps, by ill-health or other circumstance from much active "service," who nevertheless, through the sheer quality of his inner living and through a quickened ability to communicate that quality, does more to supply the needs of his fellow-men than the first.

If this is so, it raises a very vital question for everyone who seeks to be true to his stewardship. What about the quality of life behind one's giving? What about the inner personality which must of necessity express itself in all outward contact with other people, and which is ultimately, according to its character, either the curse or the saving of human living together? For the musician who sings or plays in public it is not enough to spend hours in daily practice and so produce a faultless technique; his real success as an artist depends on the very soul of music within

him. "Behind all his technique," says a shrewd musical critic, "it is his life which is speaking to the lives of those who listen to him, and the question is not whether he can sing or play this or that difficult thing, but whether he has passed enough music through his mind for a very simple thing to go straight home." What is true of art is true of life. Keep the thought, the soul, the deepest springs of life pure and fresh and vitalized, and then you have something to share which is worth sharing. "What a man thinks, and makes with thinking, is the real thing . . . action is merely delayed thinking. Mind moulds matter very slowly, but then nothing else moulds it at all."

It is easy, and common, for an Englishman with all a Northerner's cult of sheer energy, to commit the supreme folly of neglecting the cultivation of the inner life.¹ Such neglect is intelligible in those whose notions are half pagan, or whose lives, perhaps through no fault of their own, receive no impress from religion or education. But it is inexcusable, nay tragic, that those who are looked to as leaders in moral and spiritual things should allow their own true life to become choked and swamped by absorption in organization, and the quality of it to wilt and wither through sheer lack of spiritual air and nourishment. "You give me the impression," said a candid friend to a hard-working parson, "less of a 'collected Galilean' than of an understaffed American office." Apt characterization of the scamper and rush of many of our lives! "You have lived," says a character in a beautiful book,² "you have lived here five years, but lived *too heavily*. Care has swamped imagination. I did the same, in the City for twenty years. It's all wrong. One has to learn to live carelessly as well as carefully. When I came here I felt astray at first, but now I see more clearly. The peace and beauty have soaked into me. . . ." And to quote Ruskin's true

¹ On this subject see, further, Chapter XIII.

² *A Prisoner in Fairyland*, by Algernon Blackwood.

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and noble declaration: "The more I think of it, I find this conclusion more impressed upon me—that the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what it saw in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think; but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion—all in one." Only those can "see" who will make the time and opportunity to be alone, and who will spend that solitude in the company of Jesus. With Him is the Well of Life, and from no other source shall one find adequate replenishment for the very springs of all living.

Give us this day our daily bread, we pray,
And give us likewise, Lord, our daily thought,
That our poor souls may strengthen as they ought,
And starve not on the husks of yesterday.

And, let it be clearly emphasized, the motive and purpose of such life renewal has nothing whatever to do with a sort of exotic soul culture; the purpose is, simply, that what is thus won may be continually shared. And shared it can be, with startling results; for, as all recent psychology goes to show, such deep interpenetration of human personalities is one of the most remarkable, and most clearly established, facts of our human nature. You cannot limit your spiritual outgoings even if you would; what you *are*, in the uttermost recesses of your real being, is always reaching out and affecting for good or ill, the inner and the outer lives of other personalities. It is not too much to say that "the real world forces are not things, but thoughts. Every movement, for good or for evil, starts as a thought in someone's mind; a thought which gets hold of him and shapes him, and, through him, gets hold of others and shapes them too."¹ And, to cite Algernon Blackwood once again: "The sources of our life lie hid with beauty, very, very far away, and our real big, continuous life is spiritual—out of the body, as I shall call it. The waking-day life uses what it can bring

¹ E. A. Burroughs, *World Builders*, p. 31.

over from this enormous under-running sea of universal consciousness where we're all together, splendid, free, untamed, and where thinking is creation and we know each other face to face . . . all linked together by thought as stars are by their rays."¹

Now sinks to sleep the clamour of the day
And, million-footed, from the Milky Way,
Falls shyly on my heart the world's lost thought—
Shower of primrose dust the stars have taught
To haunt each sleeping mind,
Till it may find

A garden in some eager, passionate brain
That, rich in loving-kindness as in pain,
Shall harvest it, then scatter forth again
Its garnered loveliness from heaven caught.

Oh, every yearning thought that holds a tear,
Yet finds no mission,
And lies untold,
Waits, guarded in that labyrinth of gold,—
To reappear
Upon some perfect night,
Deathless—not old—
But sweet with time and distance,
And clothed as in a vision
Of starry brilliance,
For the world's delight.²

In the light of such facts as these Christian praying takes on a new significance. If anyone should ask, How can I effectively share the very best and highest experience that may be mine? I should unhesitatingly answer, Learn to pray—and in the school of Jesus Christ. What after all is prayer but the communication of life-force from man to man *through God*? Prayer, in its essence, is not the preferring of this or that particular petition, it is the opening of the whole heart and mind to the incoming of the love and energy of God, it is a deliberate taking hold of the life of God not only for myself and my own profound needs, but also, through a kind of vicarious receptiveness, for the needs of other human personalities with whom I am consciously

¹ *A Prisoner in Fairyland*, p. 313.

² *A Prisoner in Fairyland*.

or subconsciously linked. No wonder Jesus Christ said the most startling things about prayer and its possibilities (cf., for example, St. Mark xi, 22-24; St. Luke xi, 1-13). And when you note what He said, and when you consider what might be accomplished by praying (in the sense in which Jesus meant it), you stand amazed at the common neglect of this most potent instrument. The possibilities of service, of "sharing," are soon exhausted unless they can run out along these boundless spiritual lines. Love can never be satisfied with giving *things*; it must give self, and life; yea, all that it has of joy and glory, of Christ Himself, these it must give, with open hands and overflowing heart.

How surprised the disciples must have been that day by the lake when, confronted as they were by a crowd of some five thousand hungry people, Jesus turned to them and said "Give ye them to eat!" They must have felt, as no doubt many of us feel to-day as we look out on the world's desperate need, that only organizations on the largest scale can deal with such a situation. But Christ's answer is to say to any group of His friends, indeed to any single disciple, "Get on with it yourselves; just take what you have got and give it." Our own resources seem poor enough indeed: those wretched little bun-loaves and a fish or two. But if we gladly offer without reserve the "total content of our spiritual provision basket," then *He* takes it, blesses it, multiplies it, and uses it to feed the spiritually destitute. And in that wonderful sharing process, we find in fact that we ourselves get fed as well.¹

Such, at its height, is the ministry of sharing, a ministry which lies within the competence of every common Christian, a ministry which belongs to the very essence of "every-day religion." The deepest need of all men everywhere is, quite simply, their need of Jesus Christ: all that He stands for, all that He can bring to them. The greatest service

¹ For the thought in this paragraph I am indebted to *Collected Papers*, by Evelyn Underhill, Chapter VIII.

that any man can render his fellows is to share with them
all that he has of Jesus Christ.

I said, "Let me walk in the fields;"
He said, "Nay, walk in the town;"
I said, "There are no flowers there;"
He said, "No flowers but a crown."

I said, "But the sky is black,
There is nothing but noise and din;"
But He wept as He sent me back—
"There is more," He said, "there is sin."

I said, "But the air is thick
And fogs are veiling the sun;"
He answered, "Yet souls are sick,
And souls in the dark undone."

I said, "I shall miss the light,
And friends will miss me they say;"
He answered me, "Choose to-night
If I am to miss you, or they."

I pleaded for time to be given;
He said, "Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem hard in heaven
To have followed the steps of your guide."

I cast one look at the fields,
Then set my face to the town;
He said: "My child, do you yield?
Will you leave the flowers for the crown?"

Then into His hand went mine,
And into my heart came He,
And I walk in a light divine
The path I had feared to see.

GEORGE MACDONALD



VI

My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work. ST. JOHN iv, 34.

Blessed is the man who has found his work, let him ask no other blessedness. CARLYLE

Life without industry is sin, and industry without art brutality.
RUSKIN

And this is my way o' looking at it: there's the sperrit o' God in all things and all times—week-day as well as Sunday—and i' the great works and inventions, and i' the figuring and the mechanics. And God helps us with our head-pieces and our hands as well as with our souls: and if a man does bits o' jobs out o' working hours—builds a oven for 's wife to save her from going to the bake-house, or scrats at his bit o' garden and makes two potatoes grow instead o' one, he's doing more good, and he's just as near to God, as if he was running after some preacher and a-praying and a-groaning.

GEORGE ELIOT (*Adam Bede*).

When I work for myself and live for myself, I exhaust myself, but when I work for others, wisely and well, I work for God also; and for my work I get that bread which cometh down from heaven. COLLYER

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIANITY AND WORK

THERE is a story, from Victorian times, about Lord Palmerston and his comment on a certain sermon which he happened to hear. The preacher (who, it may be, was somewhat ahead of his time) dealt straightly with some aspects of "every-day religion"; and Lord Palmerston, as he left the church, was heard muttering to himself, "Things have come to a pretty pass when religion is allowed to invade the sphere of private life."

The whole argument of the present book is that religion—the Christian religion—is intended to invade the sphere both of private and of public life, and that in proportion as it fails to do so, those who profess it have missed its true spirit and meaning. In the last four chapters some attempt has been made to examine the relevance of Christianity to some of the human relationships in which men find themselves, both as groups and as individuals. In the present chapter I propose to see what Christianity has to say to that which bulks largest in the lives of most men and women, namely, their *work*.

I

Work, hard work, back-breaking, unremitting labour, too often the labour of slave and serf, has been the lot of mankind from earliest times to the present day. In our time it is estimated that 1,000,000,000 of the world's population live on the land, as agricultural labourers; the remaining 900,000,000 live out their days "to the noise of machinery, the hum of the factory, and the din of commerce." The

world's industry is indeed infinitely varied. "We see farmers harvesting cotton and wheat in America, rice and tea in China and India, coffee in Brazil, bananas in Jamaica, and cocoa and palm nuts in West Africa, rearing sheep in Australia and cattle in the Argentine. Miners and fishermen the world over add to the picture. The growth and development of manufacture and the distribution of commodities to the end of the earth complete it. The production of raw materials, their manufacture for us, and their interchange and distribution to those who need them make up the rhythm of life for most people to-day. Others are engaged in callings which render professional services, like doctors and nurses, lawyers, teachers, and ministers of religion. They are not directly engaged in the handling of materials. They deal with people, but they are not without effect in the economic realm. The skill or otherwise with which they discharge their function influences and even changes men. For a doctor simply to keep people well in body adds to their economic efficiency. Thus he contributes to the world's wealth, as does a minister of religion when he reforms evil character and confirms good people in their resolve."¹

It was argued in the first chapter that the true sphere for a man's expression of his Christianity is the petty round of common life, and not special activities of a "religious" character. The butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker, the ploughboy and the publican, the merchant and the mechanic, need not go outside the shop, the farm or the factory to express and exhibit the Spirit of Christ. The mother with a home to make and children to bring up has as fine a sphere for God-like work as any human being could desire. Indeed, if anyone wants to be a true Christian his ordinary daily work is the place at which to begin the experiment. Christianity has always proclaimed the duty and dignity of work. Ever since man began to form any

¹ *The Way of a Christian Citizen*, by E. C. Urwin, p. 81.

true picture of God, he has realized, with growing clearness, that God has made him for activity and not for idleness. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all that thou hast to do." As a right and normal thing, "man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening." Jesus labouring as a carpenter in the shop at Nazareth makes work, for all time, indispensable to true manhood. He found, and showed, God in common work. Was it His own experience of years of plough-making for His fellow-villagers which elicited the saying, preserved on an Egyptian papyrus and more than possibly genuine, "Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and there am I?" Unremitting labour for the benefit of others He knew to be characteristic of the life of God and of all God-like men—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work . . ." (St. John v, 17).

And the early Christians caught His idea of the dignity of work. The mystic secret of their new life, with its initiation into new realms of love and joy and peace, did not exempt them from humdrum daily toil. Whatever spiritual ecstasy, as a Christian, a man might or might not experience, he certainly had, as a Christian, to earn his bread and butter, and to help others to earn theirs. St. Paul is very emphatic about this. Whatever his obligations and pre-occupations as a preacher and a missionary, he insists on earning his own living by working at his own trade, that of a tent-maker; and he is very severe on people who seem to think that, as Christians, they are excused from unremitting effort to support themselves—"if a man will not work, he shall not eat" (2 Thessalonians iii, 10).

II

That apostolic injunction which I have just quoted is highly relevant to our own country just now, in these years

following the second world war. The main purpose in work, whatever higher motive may help to sustain that purpose, is sheer, stark necessity. There is in these days, and quite rightly, a general desire for better conditions of work, more leisure, and a higher standard of living. But it needs no high-flown theories of economics to make us all understand that unless we *produce* more goods and services, partly for export and partly for home consumption, the standard of living will inevitably fall, by an iron law to which there are no exceptions. And more production just means more hard work. That rugged philosopher of the Victorian age, Carlyle, addressed words to his contemporaries which have a modern ring about them. "Produce! Produce!" he cried, in characteristic language, "were it but the pitifullest, infinitesimal fraction of a product, produce it in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee; out with it then. Up! Up!"

A dim sense of the operation of economic laws is not usually a strong enough motive to keep a man's "nose to the grindstone." In past times a sense of insecurity was a powerful motive; men had to work hard not to lose their jobs; if work ceased, then a serious shortage of necessities and even semi-starvation loomed ahead. And further up in the industrial scale there was always the hope of large profits to stimulate effort. At the present time—and present conditions may last for many years—incentive in the latter case is discouraged by heavy taxation. While for the wage-workers the ingrained fears arising from the thought of unemployment are being lifted, and rightly lifted, by the action of the community. But with both these motives tending to lose their urgency, they must surely be reinforced, and gradually replaced, by a stronger sense of duty, by a willingness to work, and work hard, because one's labour is something owing to the community. But this sense of duty towards the whole of society animating all workers is not likely to come, so to speak, from nowhere; it will only

be the gradual product of intensive and widespread Christian education.¹

When a man thinks of his work in that way, it is easier to find a meaning and a joy in it, and even in some degree to discover in it an outlet for the creative power which is the birthright of every human being. I remember, in rowing days, watching an old boat-builder at work upon the frail shell of a racing eight. With infinite pains and with the unerring skill born of a lifetime's experience he handled his tools; and as he bent over his work, and the delicate cedar-wood craft took shape under his hands, the intent look on his face and the whole pose of his body seemed to suggest a profound, if unconscious, satisfaction in what he was doing. No doubt he was satisfied; for work, useful work, into which a man can throw not simply his skill but *himself*, is as necessary to human nature as food and air and love. It is a very deep-down instinct in man which bids him make things and put himself into their making. Creative work is part of life itself; that which is not expressed dies. And all the good work in the world is done in obedience to this instinct. Whether it is boats that you make, or tables, or houses, or clothes, or books, or motor-cars; whether it is thoughts, or words, or figures, or speeches, or lectures, or sermons; or whether your "work" is to assist, at some point, in the vast intricate process of supplying human need—whatever you make or do for men's bodies or men's minds, the success of the making, as well as the joy of it, will depend upon your putting into it the very best stuff that is in you. Your job, paid or unpaid, asks for the best you have.

Now work like this is sacred. God is concerned in it. When a man puts his highest self into his work he puts a bit of God into it. There is a real sense in which the Spirit of God "inspires" a good carpenter or architect or engineer, just as He may be said to "inspire" a teacher or writer or

¹Cf. Chapter III, p. 53.

preacher. The Hebrews, very early in their history, got hold of this thought of God being "in." good workmanship. "And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work. Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded" (Exodus xxxv, 30ff.).

In modern times, a singularly beautiful expression of this same idea is to be found in George Eliot's poem *Stradivarius*, "the gist of which is that God Himself might conceivably make better fiddles than Stradivari's, but by no means certainly; since, as a fact, God orders his best fiddles of Stradivari."¹ Says the great workman:

"God be praised,
Antonio Stradivari has an eye
That winces at false work and loves the true,
With hand and arm that play upon the tool
As willingly as any singing bird
Sets him to sing his morning roundelay,
Because he likes to sing and likes the song."
Then Naldo: "'Tis a pretty kind of fame
At best, that comes of making violins;

¹ Sir A. Quiller-Couch, *The Art of Reading*, p. 15.

And saves no masses, either. Thou wilt go
To purgatory none the less."

But he:
" 'Twere purgatory here to make them ill;
And for my fame—when any master holds
'Twixt chin and hand a violin of mine,
He will be glad that Stradivari lived,
Made violins, and made them of the best.
The Masters only know whose work is good:
They will choose mine, and while God gives them skill
I give them instruments to play upon,
God choosing me to help Him."

"What! were God
At fault for violins, thou absent?"

"Yes;
He were at fault for Stradivari's work."
"Why, many hold Giuseppe's violins
As good as thine."

"May be: they are different.
His quality declines: he spoils his hand
With over-drinking. But were his the best,
He could not work for two. My work is mine,
And, heresy or not, if my hand slacked
I should rob God—since He is fullest good—
Leaving a blank instead of violins.
I say, not God Himself can make man's best
Without best men to help Him. . . .

'Tis God gives skill,
But not without men's hands: He could not make
Antonio Stradivari's violins
Without Antonio. Get thee to thy easel!"

So do work and character intertwine. And Christianity, concerned so profoundly with what a man is and may become, is of necessity concerned with what he does, and what he makes, and how he works.

At this point a serious difficulty must be faced. Granted that some form of creative work (that is, work that offers fair scope for skill and self-expression) is desirable for all, how many, in fact, have the opportunity to perform such work? What proportion of the men and women in modern civilized communities have work to do that makes any real demand upon the creative faculties that are in them? I write these words at the end of a working day. How many hundreds of thousands of "workers" in England have spent to-day standing by a machine, pulling a handle, work-

ing a treadle, feeding a conveyor-belt—not “making” anything, but watching a machine make some minute part of something—the point of a pin, the thread of a screw, the head of a nail. I think of the girls in the spinning-rooms of Lancashire cotton-mills, working many hours a day at a monotonous and mechanical task. Are all these going home this evening with any sense of difficult work skilfully done, of exacting labour that has demanded, and received, their best? Or, if they think of the work at all as the hours of welcome release begin, would they not dismiss it with a shrug of boredom, or even a gesture of resentment—“same old shop, same old machine, same old foreman!”

No wonder Ruskin and William Morris, in the middle of the nineteenth century, turned in revolt against the modern industrial system and its slavery to machinery. It is a question whether they hated most the deadly soullessness of its methods or the devastating ugliness of its products. They rebelled against “the nature of the work which in our time most poor men have to do. Morris believed that their work was *joyless* as it had never been before; and that, not poverty, was to him the peculiar evil of our time against which, as a workman himself, he rebelled and wished the poor to rebel.”¹

This deep dissatisfaction with the joyless work of much modern industry, which Ruskin and Morris were the first to express, has since become far more acute and widespread. But it is easier to describe the disease than to indicate the remedy. For the mischief is deep-rooted; it lies, as Morris clearly saw, in the “values” of the civilization of our day. An industrial system which is more concerned with profit than with “use” is sure to produce ugliness, and to lose its own soul into the bargain. As Morris says, “a society which worships riches will express its idolatry even in its table-legs and chandeliers.” The only remedy is a change of values; but a change of values requires a change of heart.

¹ Clutton Brock, *William Morris: His Work and Influence*, p. 20.

And a change of heart, as many will agree, is a stubborn operation which demands a deep dynamic force such as only Christianity can produce.

It is not suggested that such a change of mind, with resulting changes of method, would, or should, abolish modern dependence on machinery. We clearly cannot cancel the mechanical discoveries of the last century or two, and go back to a world in which everything is made by hand. But we can, and must, make machinery our servant and cease to let it be our master; a resolve immeasurably sharpened by the thought of the terrifying possibilities in the newly discovered atomic energy. We are only beginning to learn how to use our mechanical power. It is, after all, only 150 years since Watts patented the steam-engine, whereas man has been on this earth some half-million years and presumably has much of his schooling still in front of him. It is safe to prophesy that, unless civilization is foolish enough to allow its best thought to be continually sterilized by war and preparation for war, even fifty years will witness an enormous advance in the subordination of machinery to humanity. "Machines," writes one who dreams dreams, "far more efficient and requiring far less attention than any we yet possess, will do all the heavy work of carrying, driving, lifting, hammering, and so on; machines will produce the scientific appliances, etc., that are beyond the power of our clumsy fingers; and machines will prepare multitudes of goods that might be called the raw material of civilized life—rough, unfinished things—articles in what are the early stages of manufacture; upon these men will work, and make as much of their houses and gardens and clothes and meals as they desire, putting art and individuality into everything about them."

And as we become more enlightened we shall, no doubt, devise further means for the humanizing of industry,¹ for bringing into all work larger and more satisfying scope for

¹ Cf. above, p. 56.

personality. For instance, in the ideal community, we should surely find ways to render harmless trades which are at present dangerous to those who work in them; for instance, measures are being taken, so far with considerable success, to cope with the special industrial diseases which afflict potters and miners. Also, where tasks necessary to the community are particularly exhausting or repellent, they should be compensated by increased leisure or lightened by some method of variation.

III

It may be some time before public opinion demands, and secures, any large readjustment of work and function in our complex industrial system. Meanwhile, at any rate for the majority of those into whose hands this book is likely to fall, there is little to prevent that Christianizing of motive and outlook which can charge all work with a new meaning, a new zest, a new delight. The man who is learning to look at life from the side of Jesus Christ, and to shape his practice accordingly, will find in his daily work the first and nearest field for his Christian experimenting. He will simply, for Christ's sake, come to hate all work that is slack and slovenly and mechanical; for Christ's sake he will put into his common every-day toil the very best creative capacity that is in him (and he will be surprised to find how much that is). It is striking to notice the kind of "extra" things that happen when a human life feels the touch of Jesus Christ. He does so much more than turn the atheist into a church-goer. He makes the cad a gentleman, the slacker a good workman, the philistine a lover of the beautiful. I recall hearing a story of a man who went to visit a clergyman and said he wanted to be instructed in Christianity. The clergyman was rather surprised (such inquirers do not, unfortunately, form the majority of most parsons' daily

callers), and asked what brought his questioner on such an errand. Had he been to a religious meeting, or listened to some sermon that impressed him? No, he said, it was nothing of that kind. "The truth is, sir," he said, "it's to do with the foreman of the place where I work. What strikes me is the way he treats us chaps, and the way he does his work, and I've just heard that he is a Christian. If he's a Christian, then I'd like to be one too."

Only recently I happened to hear about one of our great hospitals, which, though wonderfully efficient, was reputed, not unfairly, to have a somewhat unfriendly atmosphere, patients feeling that there was something rather harsh and hard about the whole place. Then there came a change of matron; the new matron, equally efficient, was also a devoted Christian woman, and within a year the whole atmosphere of the place changed completely; what had been a chilly institution had now become something like a huge and warm-hearted family.

Further, the man who tries to bring Christianity into his work will do it as his service to the community. He will make bricks, or drive a bus or mend boots, or sell socks, not in the first instance for the money he can get thereby, but in order to help supply the needs of his fellow-men. As we saw above, this higher incentive to work is not merely right in spirit, but very necessary in the changed labour conditions of to-day. There is something wrong with a man and his work unless he can enjoy in his labours something of this sense of useful purpose. His work should be his "vocation": that which he is "called" to do for the benefit of his fellows and for the Kingdom of God.

"Choice of vocation is a decision which youth is called upon to face upon the threshold of manhood, and it may be repeated more than once in a man's lifetime. Men do not necessarily follow the same occupation all through life. Choice of vocation often occasions great heart-searching,

bewilderment, and perplexity. How is it to be made? In all the varied ways in which we can serve our fellow-men, is there any one to which God specially calls us? That is ultimately what is meant by 'vocation.' Is the job we are doing the job God meant us to do?"¹

Some occupations and activities—those, for instance, of burglars and bogus company-promoters—clearly fall outside this religious definition. And about certain others I must confess to grave misgivings, such as bookmakers, money-lenders, and certain types of play-producers and film-producers—any, in fact, who make a living by preying on the weaknesses of or appealing to the animal in their fellow human beings. But, ruling these out and making all allowance for the industrial difficulties referred to above, there still remains a vast field of human labour in which a man can do his work for Christ and with Christ. Those last words are intended literally. To the Christian, as he works, belongs the intense joy of knowing that all his best labour, and the spirit he puts into it, are winning the approval of the Master Workman by his side. • This deep certainty will sometimes flash across his consciousness, and irradiate the details of his daily task. "The man of romance," Rostand has said, "is not he whose existence is diversified by the greatest possible number of extraordinary events, but he in whom the simplest occurrences produce the most live sensations." Rostand is right. Both work and play take on new zest, new savour, when you share them with Him who is the "Unseen Playmate," the Friend of all, the Elder Brother of humanity.

If, then, true work is "service," he who wants to serve his generation will take pains to find out what is the *best* service he can render, and will try to avoid merely drifting into any job that happens to present itself. Thus his work becomes part of the worship he daily offers to God. A man can go off to his day's job in a much more satisfactory frame

¹ *The Way of a Christian Citizen*, by E. C. Urwin, p. 84.

of mind if he can say as he goes, in the words of Bishop Ken's familiar hymn,

Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I go,
My daily labour to pursue,
Thee, only Thee, resolved to know
In all I think, or speak, or do.

If, through education or other circumstances, he has any special gift or capacities to offer, he will not suffer his area of choice to be less wide than the world. He will remember that, generally speaking, the *need* of human beings—physical, mental and spiritual—is greater in Asia and Africa than it is in England, and he will bear this in mind in choosing his "vocation"; and, if he is young and strong, he will be specially drawn to those people and places where the need is greatest, the life hardest, and the joy of selfless, adventurous service most assured.

IV

This chapter may close with a word to "religious workers." I dislike the phrase, and only use it as a convenient way to describe those who spend all their time and energies in what is usually called "religious" or "social" work and receive a wage for their labours. If the argument of this book is sound, then the cobbler putting his best skill into mending shoes and doing it as his service to men and to God is doing "Christian work," as truly as the Archbishop of Canterbury. The difference between them lies in the area, scope and complexity of the service rendered. It is true that "religious" work does usually involve contact with other people in the deepest and most vital regions of human living. It is, therefore, by its nature, work peculiarly rich in opportunity, heavy with responsibility, and attended by considerable perils and pitfalls. Indeed there are some in our day who are questioning the desirability of

any persons being wholly cut off from "secular" avocations and entirely set apart to "religious" work. To discuss this point would carry us beyond the scope of this chapter and book. Here I will only set down one or two considerations, which, as it appears to me, ought frequently to engage the attention of parsons, parish workers, organizers, secretaries and staff-workers of missionary and other Church societies, and other people in secretarial or administrative posts which exist to promote religious aims.

However obvious, it must be said—and perhaps needs to be said—that the first duty of the "religious" worker, as of every other worker, is to put his best into his work, and to go on doing that all the time. "Tell him never to look at the clock!" said Edison, the inventor, to someone who asked him what advice he should give to a young friend just launching on a career. And the diligence must be an *orderly* diligence. The ends of the Kingdom, as the objective of an army, are not served by bad staff-work. The chaos of this parson's writing-table, or the slovenliness of that society's office, or the financial methods of that Church, must be enough to make angels weep—or laugh! For many a religious worker the discipline of work—discipline as to time, quality and method—must be self-imposed if it is imposed at all.

This is specially true of a parson in a parish. There is no one to stand over him and see that the job is done; nor, as would be the case in practically every other profession, will he lose his position if he is slack or incompetent. The temptation to laziness is never far away, and against that temptation he has to put up a lone fight. Undisciplined, unregulated, scamped work is a poor offering to make in God's service.

But, secondly, systematic industry must always be clearly and consciously related to a purpose. Idleness has been defined as activity without purpose. It is so easy to become the slave of your own industry, the prisoner of your own

organization, and to forget that the only point of all work is *more life*. It is a pathetic sight—and it is a sufficiently frequent sight in the Churches and religious societies—to see people wearing themselves out with exacting toil, and all the time they give you the impression of being so utterly immersed in working the machine as to have quite forgotten what the machinery is for. Along that road a man may become hard, mechanical, groovy, professional. And those are not qualities that create life, or commend Christ. Spiritual ends demand spiritual means; they require agents who can master and not be mastered by the machinery they must use.

There is no space here to discuss the many fine qualities which can be and often are brought to this difficult service. Two only will I name as this chapter closes. One is the power to work alongside other people cheerfully, patiently, and with a sympathetic loyalty that makes misunderstanding difficult and mistrust impossible. Some of the gravest obstacles to the Kingdom's progress, in our own land and in the mission field, are to be found in the fact that A cannot work with B, or B cannot work with C. Is there not something seriously wrong when that happens? Ought not a Christian *as such* to be particularly good at any kind of work partnership? Many of us can achieve that spirit, and the expression of it, in games, or in war; why not in the greatest enterprise of all?

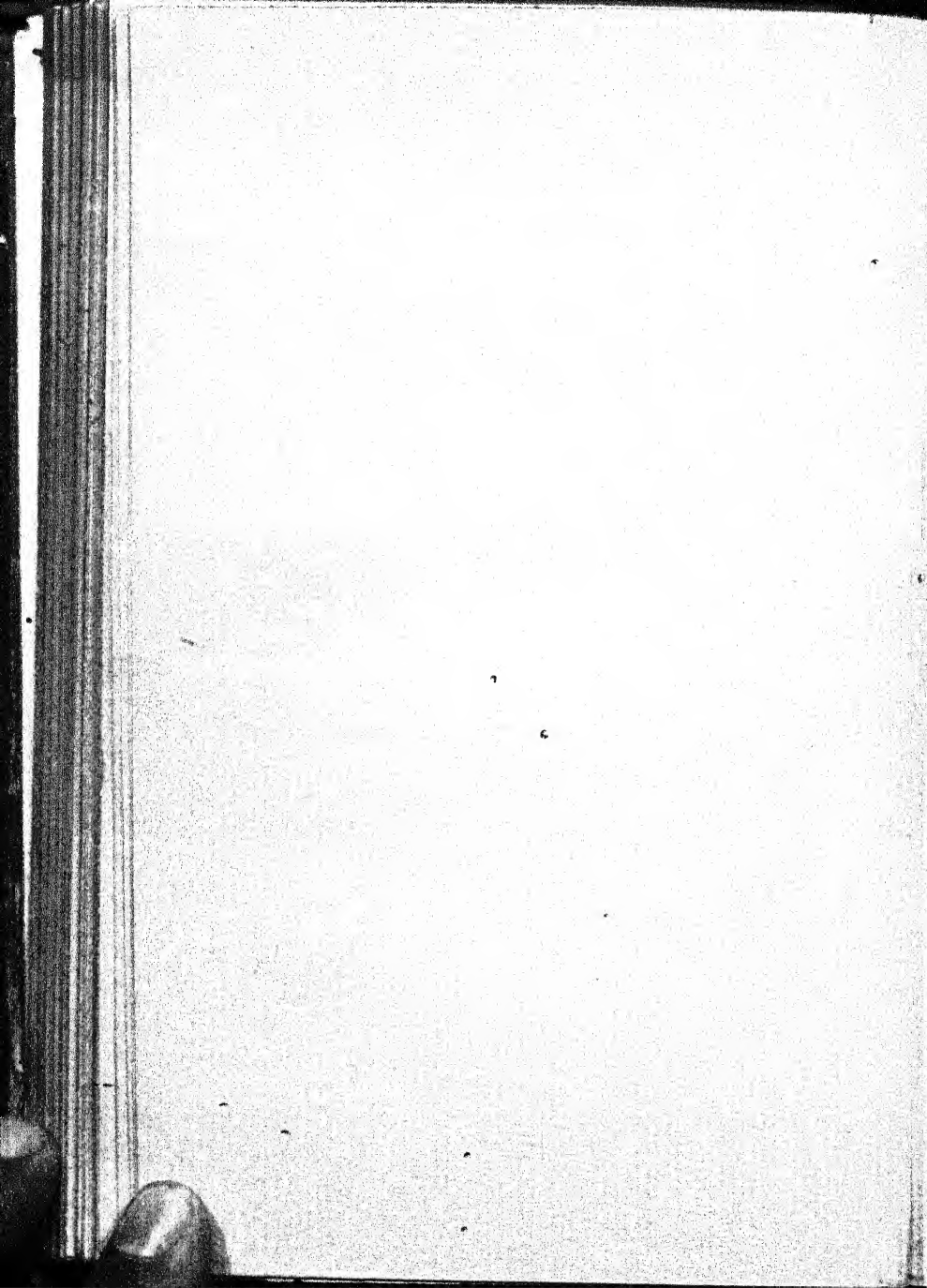
The second quality I would emphasize is gentleness. The Bible is full of God's "tender mercy"; and no follower of Christ can fail to note that vital quality in the Lord's own earthly life, and always in His closest followers, in the early days and since. "The servant of the Lord must be gentle"; "the fruit of the spirit is gentleness"; "I beseech you by the gentleness of Christ." Sometimes there are true warriors for God's Kingdom who throw away their spiritual opportunities, and even undo their best spiritual work, by being harsh, overbearing or ill-tempered.

Akin to gentleness is another Christ-like quality without which a man's work—be he bishop or bell-ringer, clerk or curate, secretary or social worker—will be, for the most part, "mere sound and fury, signifying nothing," is—humility. "Oh yes, so-and-so: a good fellow, and a fine worker, but beginning to get his head a bit swelled. And the Bishop of blank: a great leader with statesmanlike abilities, but what a pity that he is getting that sort of Bishop-self-consciousness which in the end spoils so many of them!" How often is that sort of thing said, or thought, by those who watch. After all, the only point of all "religious work" is to help people to see God. But they cannot see Him if their attention is always being diverted on to *you*. . . . The only way is Christ's way; and it takes a lifetime to learn it. "Last of all and servant of all" . . . "not to be ministered unto but to minister" . . . "not I, but Christ."

O Saviour Christ, who didst appear to Thy disciples while occupied in homely duties, I pray Thee manifest Thy presence to me in my daily work. May I find Thee in every hour, at every turn. Help me to give myself to no occupation in which I may not seek Thee. May I abide in Thee, and reap the promise which is given to all who abide in Thy love—the promise that Thou wilt make my heart Thine intimate abode. Amen.

Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy will. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA.



VII

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. PSALM xxiii, 2, 3.

Thus saith the Lord, I . . . will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem . . . and the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. ZECHARIAH viii, 3, 5.

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine. PROVERBS xvii, 22.

No pedantry can make you men!
Yours are the morning and the day,
You should be taught of wind and light,
Your learning should be born of play.

GEORGE WINTHROP YOUNG

God who created me
Nimble and light of limb,
In three elements free
To run, to ride, to swim:
Not when the sense is dim,
But now from the heart of joy,
I would remember Him:
Take the thanks of a boy.

H. C. BEECHING

There is nothing so good for the inside of a man as the outside of a horse. LORD AVEBURY

CHAPTER VII

CHRISTIANITY AND RECREATION

I

NOBODY wants to live only half a life. The whole life and rich life which all desire must possess a certain rhythm and balance, work alternating with rest and recreation. "All work and no play" makes for sheer boredom; and when a man is constantly bored, then much of his capacity for living is seriously blunted.

We have looked at some of the principles that should govern a Christian in his work. Are there also principles which he may apply to his recreation? Certainly there are. As we have already seen, God is concerned with everything in our daily living; there is no area in human life that is alien to Jesus Christ. And if we ask what His mind is about recreation, surely the answer would be, having regard to all He said about "life," that recreation should be truly *recreative*. That is to say, it should put a keener edge on life itself; it should be effective in recouping and revitalizing the healthy energies of body and mind; it should make for an all-round fitness, physical, mental and spiritual. Others besides Christians would doubtless find themselves in agreement with such a view of recreation. But that agreement might not extend to a point which for the Christian is crucial, namely, the question of *motive*. Anyone who throws in his lot with Christ has perforce to part company, completely in theory, progressively in practice, with selfishness. He learns to desire "life," and all the thousand experiences, recreation included, that make up life, not simply because it is a very pleasant thing to be alive, but mainly because "live" people (who are not necessarily agile

intellectually or physically) are the most effective agents in spreading the Kingdom of God. And this great purpose of sharing life¹ will rightly colour all his thinking and all his practice in the matter of recreation. It will not make him priggish or puritanical; but it will prompt him to be careful about bringing all his recreation and amusements within the circle of his life with God.

II

In an English village on a Sunday afternoon it is still possible to observe men and older boys lounging about doing absolutely nothing. Now occasional idleness is right enough; everyone likes sometimes to lie on his back and think of nothing, or smoke a pipe with his friends and talk of nothing in particular. But habitual lounging is another thing. And the cause of it surely lies in the fact that those who lounge simply do not know how to employ their hours of recreation. Better far that the young men of a village should join in organized games of a Sunday afternoon than loaf at street corners.

It is probable that those who read these lines are conscious of the fact that to waste recreation is to waste priceless opportunities of exploring life's unknown territories. They will probably realize also that the essence of recreation is change of activity. Rest is active as well as passive. A miner or a porter might rest himself by sitting down to read; a clerk from an office would find more rest in a strenuous game of football or a hard row on the river. "The philosopher will dig in his garden on a Sunday, while his gardener philosophizes."

In considering the many different forms of amusement and recreation which are open to him, the Christian will naturally rule out any that are questionable on moral

¹ Cf. above, Chapter V.

grounds—such, for instance, as might involve cruelty to man or beast, or would be likely to work moral harm to those who take part in them. But after making this limitation there is still left a vastly wide field of choice. A form of recreation which is both cheap and simple, and which may be said to be indispensable to all normal people, is the habit of reading. To open a book—provided you know what book to open and how to absorb its contents—is to pass through a gate into a new and wonderful world. How odd that, out of the vast numbers who have learnt to read (in the literal and technical sense) there should be so few who keep in their pockets the key of that gate. Among the obstacles that keep men out of the Kingdom of truth and beauty stands, like a great hedge of barbed wire, our lack of education. It is not easy for people to amuse themselves mentally and intelligently who have never been taught to understand true and beautiful things. And this lack of education is by no means confined to those who left school at fourteen to be absorbed into the industrial machine. There are plenty who ought to know better whose normal mental food, on work-days and holidays, is represented by a popular daily, with news and arguments served up in best “journalese,” one or two monthly magazines of the kind that has the inevitable feminine face on the cover, and a few third-rate novels. Many years ago I had an experience of sanatorium life, cut off from any outdoor games or hobbies involving physical exertion. Never shall I forget the piteous boredom of some of my fellow-invalids (one or two of them English public school men) when they found themselves reduced to *reading* as their main occupation! Their despair was comic (or tragic) to witness. They perfectly illustrated the saying that “to the alert mind everything is an adventure, to the dullard everything is a bore.”

Yet, even in after life, with a little guidance from wise advisers, a willingness to make some mental effort and a very small expenditure of money, the gate into the world of

books may be opened, and the pilgrim set forth on an altogether fascinating journey through a wide and unexplored country. With the poets he will lift up his eyes to the beauty, the romance, the hidden meanings, the eternities of life; with the scientists he will probe its physical marvels; with the historians he will watch the long pageant of its human story; with the philosophers he will seek to understand the deep mystery of its beginning and its end; while in fiction and biography he will make friends with a goodly company of men and women whom he will be the better for knowing. And as he wanders through this wonderful land he will gain a sense of values and proportion and perspective which will have a transfiguring effect on the cramped spaces of his own little life.¹

What is true of literature is true also of most sensible hobbies; they are open doors into new worlds. Drawing, sketching, photography, carpentering, gardening; the study of botany, geology, architecture, bird-life, natural history—these, and other similar pursuits, do give the mind just that change of activity that it needs, and at the same time open up new worlds of wonder and interest; they make the man a more complete man, and therefore, it may be justly claimed, a better Christian. For the most part they need little apparatus; the only conditions they demand are a certain amount of intelligent interest and of willingness to learn. One may be permitted to wonder how many of those who read these lines have ever taken the trouble to explore and understand the places of architectural or historical interest that are to be found in their own town or village or immediate locality. How blind and slow we are where things of beauty and interest are too familiar or too accessible!

¹ Compare what Robert Lynd has said about the function of poetry, in his introduction to *An Anthology of Modern Verse*, p. xviii: "It enables him to escape out of the make-believe existence of every-day in which perhaps an employer seems more huge and immanent than God, and to explore reality, where God and love and beauty and life and death are seen in truer proportions, and where the desire of the heart is at least brought within sight of a goal." •

Brief reference must here be made—and the present writer has plenty of personal excuse for making it—to the very high recreational value of outdoor games. They may be overdone in some public schools, and in big industrial towns there are too few facilities for those who would wish to play. But there can be no question that, for the great majority of younger men and women, a moderate playing of games is a factor in life of considerable importance. It supplies a discipline of the body which is invaluable; it directly promotes physical and mental health; and, in the case of team games, it has a real contribution to make to that “fellowship” which Christians desire to establish in the world. In drawing attention to these ultimate benefits from outdoor games I do not mean for a moment to suggest—surely a priggish suggestion—that such ideas can be or should be consciously in the mind during play. The chief joy of a game is the self-abandonment with which you play it—all else is forgotten in the attempt to arrive at the tape first, to cross the line for a try, to get the hockey ball into the net, or the golf ball into the hole, or whatever the immediate objective of the game may be. Indeed, where there is even a moderate degree of excelling, mastery in a game, won by toil and pains, does bring you, for the moment, to the top of one of the peaks of human living. The feel of a racing eight as she lifts under you, like a live thing, with the eight blades gripping the water in perfect time; the half-volley at cricket lifted fair and square beyond the boundary; the clean “smash” at lawn tennis or the exactly timed drive down the side line just beyond your opponent’s reach; the swerving, slippery run at rugger till you are past the back and between the posts; the long, low drive at golf, dead straight, to the very edge of the green; the jump which just clears the bar, the spurt which just breasts the tape—here are bits of experience in which one may taste something of the buoyancy, the gaiety, the keen-edged zest of human living. And I dare to say that the man who, not spoiling

his games by selfish interest or selfish ambition, learns to fit these buoyant experiences into life's larger whole, will find in them none other than Jesus Christ Himself. . . . He, the giver of "life abundant," is to be found, by those who look for Him, as surely in the playing fields as in those places where men are deliberately gathered together in His Name.

III

We may next consider that which, in larger or smaller measure, forms a part of most people's recreation, namely *amusements*. It is an obvious fact that amusements bulk very large in modern life. They "amuse" an enormous number of people, and the provision of them employs an appreciable section of the population. Indeed the mass forms of recreation and amusement, such as the cinema, dog-racing, and the spectacular professional football matches, constitute a serious problem which can only be glanced at here. These amusements, like other leisure-hour occupations such as gambling, need to be considered in relation to that which largely determines their character, namely, the deadly monotony of work which is the lot of the majority of town-dwellers to-day. This chapter does not attempt to do more than to discuss Christianity and recreation with those whose education has continued after the age of fourteen and who do not spend every working day within the iron grip of our present industrial system.

The first point for the Christian to be clear about is that the desire for amusement, the wish to find something to minister to our faculty for laughter, is a natural and healthy instinct. I should suspect something gravely wrong with the mental make-up of anyone who could see nothing funny in the antics of a clown, or on whose face a good jest evoked no smile. "Healthy laughter is the salt of life." It lends savour to much that without it would be flat and stale.

Where there is no laughter there is a diminution of life; and He, Christ, had nothing to do with diminishing life; it was more, not less, life that He came to bring. Who can doubt that He and His circle of friends must have enjoyed many a laugh together? May we, at this point, apply the argument which runs like a thread all through this book? Christianity has to do with the whole area of human living without any exception; that which is wrong it will destroy or redeem, and all the vast remainder it will irradiate, transmute, intensify. And yet men go on trying to rail off bits of life as irreclaimable, or at least as neutral. In particular have they done this with amusements. There may still survive religious people who are suspicious of amusements, or who, even if they recognize them as legitimate, regard them as having nothing to do with religion.

I would venture to assert that the attempt, sometimes taken in hand, to push this instinct for amusement outside the Kingdom of God is one of the greatest mistakes that religion has ever made. Canon Guy Rogers, in an admirable paper which he once wrote on *The Church and Amusements*, noted the fact that in the early days of the Y.M.C.A. *Punch* was excluded from its reading-rooms because, apparently, it was not sufficiently serious. "It is no part of the Y.M.C.A. to provide amusements or recreations for its members," was a common statement of policy; and when zealous secretaries went so far as to say, "no Christian young man should take part in a swimming match, or indeed a match of any kind," there was no one to enjoy the joke! Dr. Dale and Archbishop Trench received a severe rebuke from the official organ of the Society because they ventured to take part in the Tercentenary Shakespeare Celebrations at Stratford church. They were accused, in the sonorous language of the day, of "trailing their Christian priesthood in the dust by offering homage at the shrine of a dead playwright!"

Now it ought to be recognized that this attitude of com-

plete disapproval of all amusements, however strange it may seem to us, was in fact the expression of a natural and vigorous reaction against the coarseness and sensuality of many of the amusements of that day. It was, as Puritanism has always been, a protest against the encroachments of godlessness on some of life's fair spaces. But it does unquestionably represent a maimed religion. There may indeed come times, as in a debased society, when the individual who would do right has no option but to break completely with human activities which, not necessarily wrong in themselves, have become, for him and his day, hopelessly entangled with evil. Then there is nothing for it, as Christ said plainly, but to cut off the offending hand or pluck out the eye. But that, as He showed also, is a desperate remedy, and it means a maimed life. It is safe to say that in our own day, while there is much that is morally perilous and even indisputably evil in contemporary amusements, the general conditions are not such as to justify the Christian in regarding and treating amusements generally as outside the Kingdom of God. It is, moreover, a shallow and arbitrary judgment—one still prevalent in some religious circles—which would identify "the world" with this or that particular amusement. "Love not the world nor the things that are in the world": as Christians we want to obey that precept, but there is no short cut to obedience to be had by deciding that "the world" means the theatre, or going to dances, or attending race-meetings. Unfortunately "the world" cannot be thus labelled and disposed of; as many of us have learnt by now, "the world" is really an inner temper or attitude which gets up with us in the morning and lies down with us at night, and can express itself in all sorts of ways that have nothing whatever to do with amusements. Nor have we any right frankly to abandon fair tracts of God's world to the enemy. There are too many people who still cling to the timid and ancient superstition that the devil has all the best tunes! That

contracting of life in the supposed interests of righteousness, that building of fences in the vain hope of shutting out sin and shutting in holiness, is an operation which will receive little encouragement from an honest study of the earthly life of Jesus Himself, with all its sanity, its freedom, its happy comradeship, its hatred of cant and its limitless belief in the possibilities of human goodness. We should surely be closer to *His* mind if we set ourselves to reclaim for the Kingdom of God everything human which is redeemable.

Let us, in order to test the ideal thus set forth, consider in the light of it two of the commonest amusements of our day—namely, the theatre and cinema. It is clear that the drama is as fundamental and normal a part of human creative capacity as the power to paint or write or make music. And, as one of our leading actresses has pointed out, the Church should be “more preoccupied with the theatre than with any of the other arts, for the reason that the drama has so direct a bearing on the mentality of the people and the conduct of life.”¹ In fact all will agree that the theatre might be one of the highest and purest forms of our amusements. How, in practice, may such an end be attained? Not, assuredly, by good people condemning the stage on account of what they call the “life behind.” That is no solution. I should like to endorse what Canon Rogers in the paper already referred to said, and what is often forgotten, that “it is no more possible to distinguish between the purity or muddiness of the people who sing or play or dance to you than it is to distinguish between the different sources from which your money comes or the morality of the writers whose books you read. When people talk about and isolate the evil environment of the stage, they forget that there is an evil environment also in politics; that our organized business life constitutes a far more difficult

¹Miss Sybil Thorndike, on “The Aims and Ideals of the Stage,” *Southend Church Congress Report*, p. 271.

medium than the stage for living a Christian life, and that behind the whole of our social life lies an unchristianized social order." The discrimination required of those who want to see the stage functioning within the Kingdom of God is to support the kind of theatres and plays that make for that end and to discountenance those that do not. If a Christian should find himself looking on at a play or a scene that is disgusting, he should have the strength of mind to walk out, and to write and tell the management why he did so. The matter is, in the last resort, in the hands of the public. If more people cared, and showed that they cared, for good plays and for clean and clever entertainments, such as may be seen at several London theatres, then we should be less plagued and victimized by the feeble and suggestive stuff which the ignorance of too many producers supposes the public to want.

As to the cinema. For a vast number of people in this country leisure and a visit to "the flicks" are almost synonymous terms. It is estimated that somewhere about twenty-eight million people go to the cinema every week, the most regular attenders being young people between the ages of fourteen and thirty. Many thousands of children attend two or three times a week. When the motion-picture was invented prophets foretold that it would become a stupendously potent factor for good or evil. Now, in its prime, to which side the balance inclines is perhaps still undecided, though many would feel that on the whole evil predominates.

That there are thousands of good films, good in the cultural sense, and that the cinema is doing some first-class educational and instructional work, for example by means of "documentaries," is of course indisputable. But it must be owned that the debit side of the account is a serious one. It is not that the pictures extol immorality, violence or cruelty; as a rule the wife regains her husband, the true lovers meet, criminals are jailed, and virtue triumphs. The

real trouble is in the "Hollywood" scale of values, so grossly false and unreal, to which the cinema-goer is perpetually exposed, and against which he or she is usually incapable of putting up any kind of mental protection. It is a poor use of leisure to be perpetually gazing at motion-pictures which are fatuous, mediocre and childish. "The first generation of movie-reared children," says a recent critic, "is just coming of age. For many of them *The Scala* is their temple, Hollywood their paradise."

It was urged earlier in this chapter that some at any rate of a man's leisure should involve a change of activity, mental or physical, and should afford an opportunity for the exercise of his creative instincts. Just as parts of the recreation time may well be given to sheer rest and idling, so there is plenty to be said for occasional entertainment which demands only a passive response; who is there who does not enjoy an occasional visit to theatre or ballet, cinema or circus? But the habitual cinema-goer makes a habit of passivity; his—or more often her—adventures are second-hand, she luxuriates in artificial emotion ("It was lovely: I cried all the time!"), and in the end comes, unconsciously, to depend upon this weekly, or bi-weekly, escape from real life.

In so far as things are wrong, what is the remedy? For the cinema to catch up with the radio in the matter of civilized, cultured, *good* entertainment will take many years. Moreover the cinema is strongly entrenched "big business." In 1939 638 films were exhibited (just over twenty per cent of which were British), which brought in a box office total of some 110 millions. The only way, in the long run, to diminish the poor stuff is for the public to demand what is better, and to refuse to be taken in by the high-pressure advertisement of films which it doesn't really want to see. In some places "Film Review Circles" have been started, to discuss all sorts of films, including those shown at local cinemas; which is doing something to help cinema-goers to

discover what they themselves really want and to encourage them to stay away if they don't get it.

IV

This chapter on the Christian use of leisure will be incomplete unless something is said about "Sunday Observance." It must be confessed that many of the older ones among us used to find the Victorian Sunday—anyhow from the children's point of view—boring in the extreme. The meals were cold and unappetizing, the streets were empty and dull, the walk to church and back through respectable London squares was the tamest form of peregrination invented by man. "Church" itself was interminable, and "Sunday reading," with magazines, novels, and newspapers banned, was only redeemed by the full-blooded fight with Apollyon, and "Christian's" other lusty adventures, recorded in the pages of the chief Sunday book, *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Since those days the pendulum has swung right across. Between the wars the habit grew of regarding Sunday as a weekly opportunity for motoring, excursions, picnics, games, concerts and cinemas; while the newer generation now chiefly remember the war-time Sunday as a day for military exercises, overtime work, and the pictures. There are vast numbers of people, old as well as young, who do not know that Sunday is the gift of Christianity to the world, and have no conception of the loss, actual and potential, which threatens them in the destruction of that gift. For it is a fact that, in many parts of the country, Sunday is ceasing to afford that weekly chance of quiet and rest which has been invaluable to millions of people for many generations. Apart from religion there are numbers of people who feel uneasy about this loss; and there are many in the Church who are dissatisfied with the old negations and prohibitions. What is the solution?

Some of us would like to see the Church give more thought to this important question, and offer clearer guidance on the matter. It is not enough to denounce the "desecration" of Sunday and to try to reassert the old taboos. Something more positive and constructive is needed. What, then, are the principles on which we should act, the objectives we should seek? What is it of deep and abiding value that underlies that time-honoured institution, our "English Sunday"? To start with—and this applies to leisure and holidays in general as well as to Sunday in particular—it is quite clear that the sequence whereby rest follows labour is not just a human invention, but is in some profound way a part of the very structure of life. Wherever you look you see this great law of rhythm at work. Night follows day; the spring succeeds the winter's sleep; sunshine and rain, storm and calm, heat and cold, follow each other in blessed alternation, as if they were Nature's pulse-beats. So, too, with the human organism. This principle of rhythm governs our being. All our life, physical, mental, spiritual, is a giving out, or a taking in, of energy. And the more we give out, the heavier our labour, the more we need, indeed must have, due intervals and periods for recuperation. Take away from the human machine these pauses for rest and refreshment, and, like a motor without oil or petrol, the engine will run badly and finally stop.

It is not surprising that, in the long human story, the practice of a regular rest day is found at a very early stage to have the sanction of religion behind it. It was not invented by theologians, though theologians may have invented explanations of its origin. The Sabbath was observed in Babylonia centuries before the time of Moses. Then, as everyone knows, it became an important part of the Mosaic Law and of the Hebrew religion. For centuries the Jewish Sabbath taught men to value and to conserve a weekly day of rest: more important still, it taught men the

supreme value of setting aside a definite and regular time for the worship of God. The Jewish Sabbath was succeeded by the Christian Sunday.

With Jesus, religion began again; and His followers, with a true instinct, seized upon the Day of His Resurrection, the first day of the week, as their weekly day of rest and refreshment and joyful worship. It is therefore a distortion which would make people think of Sunday with reference rather to its prohibitions than to its positive value and use. No one could have been more emphatic than our Lord Himself that "the seventh day" should be a day for natural, reasonable rest and recreation, for good deeds, for quiet and worship, and not for a gloomy, artificial, over-regulated inactivity. His words about the Sabbath, and the things He Himself did on that day, come sweeping like a fresh breeze among the rusty cobwebs of ancient legalism; and the legalistic Scribes and Pharisees disliked Him accordingly. Moreover, it is perfectly evident from the fragmentary records of His life which we possess, that He Himself required leisure, and that He taught His disciples how to use it. After those laborious days when "power" had been going forth from Him in help and healing, He evidently needed periods for spiritual and physical recuperation.

We are therefore on sure ground in giving Sunday a unique place in the religion we profess. The great sceptic Voltaire was near the mark when he exclaimed once in conversation, "If I could capture the English Sunday, I could destroy Christianity." Having regard, then, to this guidance from the Gospels, how should our Sunday be spent?

I think it may be claimed that the first thing which a Christian man—indeed, any rational person—would require about Sunday is *quiet*. By that I do not mean a mere private quiet achieved by escape from cities and crowds, but a reasonable degree of public, communal quiet. Without such quiet, Sunday would, as many feel, be short of

can always be traced, especially where the services are wooden and uninspiring; but I am sure that if Christians generally had a clearer grasp of this significance of their common worship, those questions of taste, of personal likes and dislikes of hymns, prayers, sermons, would be seen in right proportion, and be largely shorn of their power to debase worship into a mere thing of entertainment or of dull routine.

Moreover, the real Christian will appreciate and utilize the discipline of such regular, common worship: both the discipline of this repression of individual caprice which must always be involved in a truly communal worship, and the discipline of keeping to certain days and hours of worship irrespective of the mood of the moment. I am not impressed by the alleged difficulty of worshipping if "you don't feel like it." No one applies that sort of reasoning to work, or meals, or travel, or social engagements. Besides, as was pointed out by the present Bishop of Sheffield in a pamphlet (now out of print), "We are, in fact, more likely to find God everywhere if we are accustomed to meet him particularly somewhere. If we are to be loyal to God all the time, it is necessary to set apart some particular time for professions of loyalty. If all the days of the week are to be holy, it is necessary to keep 'holy day' once a week."

To worship, then, would be allowed the first claim as the Christian considers the spending of his Sunday. But next to, and indeed very closely allied with, this refreshing of the soul, I think I should place a very deliberate *refreshing of the mind*. Such mental refreshing would naturally be, in part, of a definitely religious kind. Worship itself has everything to gain if it is the expression of a reasonable faith, and if it includes due opportunity for study and instruction. Moreover, it is the bounden duty of every Christian to understand his faith, to relate it to the world around him, to be able to expound it to others; in fact, as the Master Himself insisted, to *love God with his mind*.

But such an effort to understand means study and reading, time and trouble, the opportunity for which, for the great majority of people, is simply not to be had on a week-day: Sunday is, in fact, their only chance. So, at home and in study group, in class and in church, with the Bible itself the chief textbook, and to accompany it some of the many excellent religious publications available to-day, let this pondering on the things of God have its place in the Sunday routine.

Such mental "recreating" should be given the widest possible scope; and while not neglecting study of the Christian faith and the more obvious concerns of God's Kingdom, should, so far as may be, make excursions into the wide realms of things beautiful and good and true. When the effort is made to leave on one side the Sunday newspaper, the picture magazine, the feeble novel, and the mind braces itself to lay hold of some of the treasures to be found in poetry and science and literature, then the reward is not far off—the reward of a new tone and quality and savour in the whole of life. There is a tingle in the mind after reading a play of Shakespeare's not unlike the delicious glow of the body after a swim in cool waters.

Soul, mind, body—man is a trinity; if he is to attain a complete development of personality, care must be bestowed on every part of that complex organism which is himself. What, then, of *Sunday and physical recreation*? If a "healthy mind in a healthy body" is the ideal, what wrong can there be in games played on a Sunday?

As already urged, there are cogent reasons against organized Sunday games, which are really a form of mass amusement. Games of a more "private" character fall into a different category. Most younger people have a great deal of superfluous physical energy which must find some outlet on the day when they are not tied to labours which are probably stationary if not sedentary. Again, many a middle-aged man, cooped up in an office through the week

and making no demands on his limbs save for a short walk to and from the station, would do much better on a Sunday to take some vigorous exercise than to sleep off the effects of too good a lunch. I should therefore take the view that there is nothing necessarily contrary to Christian principle in playing a game on Sunday. Better far play tennis or cricket than lounge at a street corner: and by all means let some of Sunday be given to keeping the body fit, especially when such opportunities are hard to come by through the week.

Nevertheless, as St. Paul said long ago, a thing may be lawful yet not necessarily expedient: and I am bound to add that the Christian (I make no attempt here to prescribe for others), before he embarks on his Sunday game, will have certain other considerations to take into account. He will naturally regard it as a point of honour to take his place at the common worship of the great Fellowship of which he is a member, and he will also safeguard some of his precious Sunday hours for thinking and reading. Another consideration in view of his Christian responsibilities which he will take into account as he plans his Sunday, is the time available for games and recreation during the week. For those who have more than usually tedious or exacting labours throughout the week, carried on perhaps in particularly confined quarters, or a stuffy atmosphere, it may be a paramount duty to get physical exercise on the Sunday. But for the majority, nowadays, the shortening of hours of labour, and the introduction of "summer-time," have produced opportunities of week-day recreation formerly impossible. And it is sometimes noticeable that those who play games longest on week-days are the most anxious to continue them on Sundays.

What has been said so far about the spending of Sunday by no means exhausts the question from a Christian point of view. The Christian can never consider himself alone. He is utterly committed to that kind of outlook which

regards it as of paramount importance to see, so far as he can, that other people have a share in the "good" which he himself desires. So that for a Christian to secure Sunday worship and rest and recreation simply for himself does not get him very far along the road of his plainest duty. There is evidence that this principle does receive a fairly wide recognition. I know of a young fellow who works hard in a garage all the week: he is also a keen tennis player, but every Sunday afternoon he gives up to teaching a class of small boys. I know an able and very busy solicitor, who is fond of golf; but Sunday afternoon sees him occupied in making some children happy at a large orphanage. I think of girls, keen, young, athletic, tied in offices all the week, but quite content, when Sunday comes, to give up some of their precious hours to teaching infants, running study circles, or attending discussion groups. I think of many others, from all sections of the community, who would feel that Sunday had been poorly spent unless they had done some little act of mercy or helpfulness, in a hospital ward, perhaps, or in some place or home where their ministrations might bring help and comfort. I am not saying in all this—what we parsons and religious leaders are perhaps somewhat apt to say or think—that you can hardly be a good Christian unless you take a Sunday-school class on Sunday afternoons. There are numbers of Christians who are not and never will be "called" to rather specialized tasks of that kind. And there are very many—doctors and nurses, for instance—whose work in the week is so arduous that, for their own sake and for the sake of those they minister to, Sunday ought to give them some complete rest and relief. The contention I am making is that the Christian whose week-day work runs on fairly normal lines, should consider the question of Sunday recreation in the light of his opportunities and obligations of Christian service, and do his best to fit together into a harmonious whole the claims of worship, recreation, and service.

I hasten to add that if the leisure of Sunday brings opportunities for the discharge of small obligations, the rendering of small services, those opportunities will often be found, literally, to begin at home. Sunday might well be "a weekly festival of the home." There are many fathers who, owing to the exigencies—real or supposed—of daily work, see all too little of their children. There are many mothers who become completely absorbed in and overwhelmed by little household duties, and lose the knack of making the family life in itself satisfying and attractive. There are many young people, of both sexes, who without a thought vote "home" to be a bore, and take no trouble to cultivate an interesting, rewarding intimacy with their parents. Might not some of these gaps be filled on a Sunday? Could not Sunday be in part dedicated to the rediscovery and the deliberate cultivation of the fellowship of the family? I believe there are innumerable possibilities in this direction. And much of what has just been said is true also of friendship, and of the duty of keeping friendships in repair. That visit which never gets paid, that long overdue intimate talk, that oft-promised and never realized walk out into the country, that letter of help and sympathy so long planned but never yet written—Sunday is just the day for these things. Indeed, if a sufficient number of decent-minded, friendly folk were to set to work and do on Sunday even a tithe of all these simple, happy, quiet, rewarding things that wait to be done, there would be no question of cinemas and football matches and open shops; these organized attractions would die the natural death of the unwanted.

The Christian Sunday, then, is a great and precious heritage, and the whole community ought to see that it is guarded and cherished. But the final responsibilities of guardianship must necessarily rest with the Christian society. "Sunday" began as a Christian institution, and its vitality will always depend upon the vitality of the Chris-

tian faith and the Christian Church. Let the Church, by precept and practice, show men Sunday, not as a chill thing of gloom and negation and repression, but as

A day of rest and gladness,
A day of joy and light,
A balm of care and sadness,
Most beautiful, most bright,

and the result shall be to keep open, for all generations, everyman's road to the fountains of living waters.

V

There is only one more word that may be added, and it should be said very plainly. For the Christian disciple, his whole view of life and his whole way of living must, at every point, take into account the Cross of Jesus Christ. That richness of life, physical, mental, spiritual, for which all men hunger, which he, the Christian, longs fully to experience and to share, is inseparably connected with the death of Jesus. He, its giver, Himself entered life by the gate of death, Himself was made perfect by the things that He suffered; it is the wounds in His hands and feet that give His love, the very love of God Himself, its unique power to heal and redeem. We therefore, servants of the Crucified, will be content to sit loose to this world's pleasures. We will not forget that we are disciples of Him who, on earth, knew no luxuries and had not even where to lay His head. In all our fun and recreation, gratefully accepted and enjoyed as His own gift, we shall never be wholly unmindful of the submerged multitudes, friends of His, shut out from the shining land. We shall learn, like St. Paul, to travel light; with a happy self-sufficiency¹ to be equally content

¹ Cf. Phil. iv, 11: "I have learned how to be content wherever I am. . . I have been initiated into the secret for all sorts and conditions of life, for plenty and for hunger, for prosperity and for privations."

And cf., too, 2 Cor. vi, 10: "as having nothing and yet possessing all things."

with much or with little of those things that make life pleasant. And, like the Master Himself, we shall, with high-hearted resolve, learn to put *the Cause* before everything else, and to find our greatest joy in willing sacrifice.

VIII

Jesus spake a parable unto them saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my corn and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool. . . . ST. LUKE xii, 16-20.

It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.
1 CORINTHIANS iv, 2.

There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth.
PROVERBS xiii, 7.

The poor man wanteth many things, but the covetous man wants all. Oh, that there should be such boundless desires in our little bodies. SENECA

It is probably much happier to live in a small house, and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle, and have nothing to be astonished at. RUSKIN

What I saved, I lost;
What I spent, I had;
What I gave, I have.

Epitaph.

CHAPTER VIII

CHRISTIANITY AND MONEY

I

WHAT is money? The question appears to be a simple one; but the *Encyclopædia Britannica* has to admit that there is no simple answer to it. You can only define money in terms of function. Money in itself, untouched and unused, is nothing; hence the grotesqueness of the miser's hoard of glittering coins. The point of money is in the range of things it can *do*. In a rough-and-ready fashion it may be described as a form of power. It enables you to exchange goods; if you have clothes to sell and want bread, and your neighbour has bread and wants clothes, money provides a standard of value, and a currency, whereby the exchange can be easily effected. Its range of function is indeed enormous. Without it, in a civilized community, there is no life to be had worth calling life. With it, you can make the world minister to your necessities and your convenience, your tastes and your pleasures, your aims and your ideals. Through it, by spending and by giving, you can express your personality, you can make some effective impact on your generation. Indeed, with sufficient money you may purchase power which emperors of old might have envied; you may buy newspapers and influence millions, and go far to shape a bit of the world to your liking.

It is not therefore surprising that money has come to acquire an enormous influence in world affairs. It is the token for measuring the voluminous interchange of goods and services, both within nations and between nations. It is the power to command the goods and services of other

nations or people by the goods and services we can ourselves give in return. Hence the enormous importance of export trade, especially in this post-war period when we are a debtor nation.

As we all of us know, this money-power factor looms large in every individual life. I came across a book once entitled *Success*, in which these two words, "money" and "power," occur with significant frequency. The author's idea of success appears to be expressed almost exclusively in the money-power terms. Fame, for instance, in his view, "is only another name for either money or power." If you want to find reality, he says in effect, handling money is the way to do it. It is only "money striven for that brings with it the real qualities in life." "The money brain is, in the modern world, the supreme brain."

Now it has to be admitted that this gospel is swallowed and practised by a very large number of people. The acquisitive and possessive instinct is present in all of us, and dominant in many of us; and it is money or power that most people try to acquire. It is easy for the moralist to condemn off-hand this devotion to a life of getting and having. It should, however, be remembered that the desire to succeed is not in itself a bad thing, and that some successful men, especially those high up in the industrial world, are spurred on less by a wish to amass a fortune than by the sheer delight of solving problems and mastering difficulties. There is much in what R. L. Stevenson has said, that the true blessedness of mankind is not to arrive but to travel. But when all allowance has been made for this motive, it still remains true that, unless he is exceptionally situated or very resolute in pursuing his ideals, the ordinary man who wants to "succeed" finds himself competing in the fields of money-getting. And, again and again, to enter those lists involves, almost inevitably, becoming selfish and hard and covetous. *To have* becomes, insensibly, the main end of human living; the interests of property come to take

precedence of all other claims and values. Lord Macaulay once said that "if the multiplication-table had interfered with any vested interests, some people would not have believed it yet."

With this view of money, and the way of living it involves, the Christian has quite definitely to part company. It is a question of values, with irreconcilable alternatives; the "money-loving herd" chooses one of them; he, as a Christian, chooses the other. He cannot, of course, do without money (we shall see, in a moment, what principles should govern his use of it); he may, indeed, be in a position in the financial or commercial world where he has to handle, conceivably to acquire, large sums of it; but, as a follower of Jesus, he will never attempt to get it simply for his own selfish use or to gratify his own desires. He has to recognize the total incompatibility of serving God *and* "mammon." There is no subject on which Christ's teaching is more explicit and more emphatic than on the moral evil of loving money. He was constantly trying to make men see that man's true life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesses; that life's real treasures are such as no moth or rust can corrupt, or thieves take away; and that engrossing love of money may damage a man's character beyond repair.¹ Yet of all the compromises that religious people, with human weakness, fumble after, none is commoner than the attempt to mix religion and money-making. It is a pathetic sight to see such an one bewildered and exhausted by "the hopeless toil of living two lives . . . with one eye on this world and one on the next, part of his life given to God and part withheld, backing two horses at once and never knowing quite which he wants to win."²

¹ St. Luke xii, 15; St. Matthew vi, 19, xiii, 22; cf. 1 Timothy vi, 9-11. Cf. also St. Luke xvi, 19f. (great possessions causing selfish indolence); St. Luke xii, 13f. (fellowship, spoilt by covetousness); St. Luke xii, 16f. (business men heaping up wealth).

² T. W. Pym, *Psychology and the Christian Life*, p. 101.

II.

None of us is wholly guiltless where religious compromising is concerned. But suppose that we do at least *want* to follow Christ in the matter of our money and material possessions, how are we to set about it and what will it actually involve? What are the principles on which the Christian is to regulate his use of money? The first and obvious use of money, for everyone, is governed by the necessity of maintaining life at a reasonable level of satisfaction and efficiency. Christ showed that in God's sight every human life has an absolute value, both for what it is and what it may become. This means, in our world, that every man ought (normally) to have the opportunity of earning enough money to keep himself and his family in health, and, beyond bare necessities, to have a sufficient share in such boons as education and leisure as to secure for living a certain measure of fullness. Let me hasten to add (what has been pointed out in another connection) that, for the Christian, fullness of life can never be a merely selfish aim; it is the means whereby he may play his part in the whole scheme of things and fit in with, and further, the plan of God.

With this general statement as to the ordinary, and proper, use of money, most people would probably agree. One or two reflections, however, at once suggest themselves. In the first place, we are faced with the staggering fact that even a modest minimum of satisfying life is quite beyond the reach of a vast number of the present population of the world. With such a state of affairs true philanthropy can never rest satisfied. The principle of the living wage is one way of giving concrete expression to this ideal of equality of opportunity.¹ Every adult ought to have some "socially serviceable" means of earning a wage sufficient to give him and his family some real share in Life. And this is a claim

¹ Cf. above, p. 88.

which the Church should back, in the name of Christianity, with all the weight of its authority. Too often has history found it siding with the "haves" as against the "have nots."

But what is a fair share of "life"? What is a reasonable, average level of "personal civilization" (if the phrase may be used) with which a Christian ought to be content? Obviously the capacity to live, in the word's deeper senses, will vary with the infinite variety of different people. But is there some normal setting of life—the kind of setting which money can procure—which ought to satisfy? How much ought I, as a Christian, to spend, for myself and my family, on food and house, on comfort and convenience, on education and recreation? Such questions are easier to ask than to answer. Indeed it is doubtful if there is any one answer which is applicable to all. Each must find his own answer, in the light of Christ and his own conscience. The answer is naturally and rightly affected by a man's relation to the whole community. "His right to the goods and services of others, the milkman, the baker, the butcher, and the grocer, are determined by the goods he offers or the services he renders. His personal expenditure can affect the nation's economy. Production is determined by what he spends on this or that, and his savings contribute to the development of the nation's trade. Consider, for example, the effect of the tobacco habit or the need for cotton goods on trade with America, or take the way the industries of the country are affected by the way housewives spend their weekly house-keeping money. Nor should we forget the dislocations of the national economy by profligate expenditures like those on drinking or gambling."¹

Again, the Christian will make some attempt to envisage not so much a universal standard as a universal *test*—the test of efficiency, physical and spiritual, in the service of the Kingdom. With due regard to my individual capacities, and to my particular circumstances, with due regard also to

¹ *The Way of a Christian Citizen*, by E. C. Urwin, p. 95.

the dispossessed multitudes, what is the minimum I need to make me fit to play my part in life as a Christian citizen? That is the kind of question a Christian might well ask himself.

One other consideration may be mentioned at this point. The Christian, as such, will weigh carefully not merely the way in which he uses his money, but the method by which he gets it. It has to be admitted that it is easier to state this principle than to indicate with precision how it may be acted upon.¹ In the closely woven interdependence of modern industry, it is very difficult for an individual to strike out a line of his own in money affairs or business affairs. Where the system as a whole makes for selfishness, it is hard to live and work within it unselfishly; if most people in your line of trade are out simply for profits, it is far from easy to run your own business on a basis of service. But, as many Christian business men have splendidly shown, "where there's a will there's a way," and Christianity need not be left out of the making of money. And the man who is determined to follow Christ will simply refuse to sell his services to, or invest his money in, any business that is not in its main intention useful to the community, and that does not treat with equity and humane consideration those who work for it. Only by such action, concerted and on a large scale, can we Christians prove the ultimate fallacy of the common assumption that covetousness and selfishness are the only effective economic motives.

III

Let us pursue this question of money use to a further stage. The majority of people, after providing for life's necessities, are left with a certain margin, large or small as

¹ Cf. Fosdick, *The Meaning of Service*, p. 184: "'Thou shalt not covet' sounds well in the abstract, but it becomes perplexing when one adds, 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's customers!'"

the case may be. On what principle is this margin of money-power to be used? There is a clear Christian answer to this question. Reference has already been made to the Christian warning as to the moral peril always latent in money. If it is easy to become selfish and covetous in the process of getting money, that fatal habit of thought and life is perhaps still easier to develop in the matter of using your "margin." As we all know very well, the "margin" in these post-second-war days, is not what it used to be! For most people a large proportion of what money they have to spend is swallowed up by taxation and by the increased cost of living; moreover, even if the money is there, there is a considerable shortage of "consumable goods" on which to spend it. However, it is reasonable to expect that financial conditions will not always be as bad as they happen to be at the time this book is being written, or rather re-written. Moreover even now, most people have some "margin," however slender, and, owing to the increase in wages and the standard of living, classes of the community now have money to spend in a way which is unfamiliar to them, and indeed unprecedented in our history. The "new poor" are having to cut down their out-goings, including their "charities"; how are the "new rich" going to employ their new-found wealth?

Now Christianity never says it is wrong to possess any margin; but it suggests clear principles for its use. These principles may be summed up in two words. One of them is *detachment*. The Christian cannot remind himself too often that, for him, material things can never be sought for their own sakes: that his "life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth." Therefore, he will sit loose to material possessions as to material enjoyments.¹ He will refuse to give over-much of thought and energy to that which the moth and rust doth corrupt. He will not ~~refuse~~ responsibilities which he should clearly accept; but

¹ Cf. above, p. 139.

he will endeavour to avoid being encumbered with an undue amount of personal property and personal privilege. He will avoid an exaggerated scrupulousness, and will try to learn the secret of detachment, being neither put about if he has to go short nor softened when things are comfortable.

And if to-night mine inn be good,
I shall be glad;
But if to-morrow's fare be rude,
And lodging bad,
It shall be so much easier then
To strike my tent, and on again.¹

The other guiding word is *stewardship*. The principle of stewardship in relation to all gifts, whether of character or property, is clearly laid down in the parables of the Talents and the Pounds.² All that I have is in no sense my absolute property to do with just as I like; it is held in trust for God and His Kingdom, and I am responsible to Him for a faithful discharge of my stewardship. This is a far-reaching principle. You may be able to justify, at the bar of your conscience, this or that expenditure, ~~as~~ tending directly or indirectly to promote the ends of the Kingdom. What cannot be justified, if you recognize your stewardship, is irresponsible expenditure. Gambling is an obvious instance of irresponsible expenditure. Why, it is often asked, is it right for one to spend ten shillings on a book, or a theatre, or a game of golf, or any other favourite hobby or recreation, and wrong for another, who enjoys racing, to spend his ten shillings by putting it on a horse? I should answer unhesitatingly that, as God's steward, I have no kind of right either to part with money I hold, or to receive another man's money, in a purely irresponsible fashion. Stewards may not do that; "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." Moreover, if, among Church people generally, there was less of the idea that it is rather fine generosity to give £1 or £100 to this or that part of the work of God's

¹ Walter C. Smith.

² St. Matthew xxv, 14-30; St. Luke xix, 11-27.

Kingdom, and rather more of the idea that the Kingdom's members would, as the natural and normal thing, lay out their trust funds in the Kingdom's interests, we should hear less of recurrent financial crises in Church societies.

IV

How, precisely, is this stewardship to be discharged? What are the most effective ways in which this margin of money-power can be used for good? One or two practical suggestions may be offered. First and obviously, a certain proportion of any margin should be devoted to helping those who are short of life's necessities. From the earliest times this has always been recognized as a fundamental Christian duty. Indeed, as I have already shown in the chapter on "Sharing Life," some Christians feel this duty to be so urgent that, besides giving of their "margin," they endeavour, for Christ's sake, to practise a voluntary equality in the standard of living.¹ In any case, while so many of his brother men are in such desperate need, every true Christian will feel it impossible to spend large sums on his private needs or pleasures, and he will eagerly seek for ways in which he can use his money-power to help stem physical distress at home and abroad. For instance, at the time these words are written, the distress and the need on the continent of Europe, especially in Germany, is almost beyond computation. He will always realize that the Kingdom of God is concerned not merely with "saving souls," but with the provision of all that makes for abundant life.

Then, further, it is clearly right and Christian that a certain amount of everyone's money should be devoted to the common benefit of the community in the form of taxes. The Christian Churches might well give more teaching and inspiration in this matter. Why does one hardly ever hear

¹ Cf. p. 88.

a sermon on the meaning and the duty of tax-paying from a Christian point of view? It needs to be asserted emphatically that a Christian, as a Christian, ought to be scrupulously honest and invincibly cheerful in paying his rates and taxes. We should not miss the significance of our Master's plain words about this. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (St. Matthew xxii, 21). That "*and*" is a Hebrew expression which roughly corresponds to our phrase "and so." "Give the State what is due to the State, and so, in doing this, you will be giving God what is His—you will be performing a duty which *He* lays upon you."

Whatever remains of money-power's margin should clearly be applied, directly or indirectly, to furthering the aims of the Kingdom of God. It is, of course, true that, in the last resort, the most effective way of spreading the Kingdom is by the quiet, penetrating, unobtrusive leaven of personal influence and personal service, which costs nothing: nothing, that is, that can be expressed in terms of money. But it is also true that any form of corporate and organized Christian activity, such as maintaining Churches, paying ministers, running clubs, printing Bibles, spreading literature, sending out missionaries and so forth, cannot possibly be carried on without money. To transfer Christians from a more favoured to a less favoured country—from say, England to Central Africa or Turkestan—in order thus to share our life with those who are even more needy than we, cannot be done without a large expenditure. And wherever you attempt to Christianize environment, here or elsewhere—which you must do if you want to share all that makes up life—then you are at once and inevitably committed to a number of tasks of a material kind, travelling, transporting, building, printing, feeding, doctoring and so on, all of which are completely dependent on forms of power which money alone can provide. Money is, in fact, "the most portable shape into which human personality can

precipitate itself"; your money provides an almost magical way in which you can supply personal needs, and respond to personal calls thousands of miles away on the other side of the globe.

No doubt it is always difficult to find the needed money for the many Christian and philanthropic enterprises, and the difficulty is accentuated when there is economic distress. But the larger part of the difficulty would be removed if more Christians could come to see that to spend money on the Kingdom is not a pious "extra" or a particularly laudable act to be seen and praised by men, but a plain, ordinary Christian stewardship. How could it be otherwise with the children of Him who so loved the world that He gave all, even His only Son?

IX

The Word was made flesh. ST. JOHN i, 14.

Whatever a man sows, that will he also reap. He who sows in the field of his lower nature, will from that nature reap a harvest of destruction and ruin; but he who sows to serve the Spirit will from the Spirit reap life eternal.

GALATIANS vi, 7, 8, (Weymouth's version).

Life is only incidentally physical. It is really an astounding spiritual phenomenon. VIDA SCUDDER

No man has ever dared to call Jesus, in any opprobrious sense, sexless: yet in character He stands above, and, if one may use the term, midway between the sexes,—His comprehensive humanity a veritable storehouse of the ideals we associate with *both* the sexes. No woman has ever ~~had~~ any more difficulty than men have had in finding in Him the realized ideal.

G. A. JOHNSTON ROSS

He is the half part of a blessed man
Left to be finished by such as she;
And she a fair divided excellence,
Whose fullness of perfection lies in him.

SHAKESPEARE

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence praise.

J. G. WHITTIER

CHAPTER IX

CHRISTIANITY AND SEX

I

NO book which sets out to describe and explain "every-day religion" can be silent about a deep-down human instinct which, for every man and woman, is one of the great shaping forces of life. To shut our eyes to the power of the sex instinct is foolish and futile; wiser is it to seek to understand it and its true place and function in human living.

This chapter is an attempt to state, simply and plainly, what the writer believes to be the Christian view in a matter which, in some directions, raises very complex questions. Let me begin by referring to two ideas which are common but not Christian. One is the notion, bequeathed to us from the Victorian age, that the sex instinct, with a great deal of its expression, is at bottom something not quite decent, something which should be hushed up and kept a mystery, something which "nice" people should not discuss even in intimate conversation. There must be some men and women who find it hard to shake off the idea, implanted in childhood and fostered during school years, that nature's processes of birth are mysteries which are not really quite respectable; and it is such people who are too prone to meet children's questions on these things with evasions and falsehoods, thus often driving the boys and girls to get their information from undesirable and grimy sources. And so in their turn, they, as they grow up, never wholly escape from the dreadful fallacy that there is something in sex that is essentially base and depraved. That is a mischievous fallacy. It is the unclean minds of human beings that have read into the wonder and beauty of the sex relationship a

shame and an indecency which in truth are not there. If God is in creation, if nature is His garment and her activities the outcome of His working, if in Christ He became man with a body like unto our bodies—then every capacity and function of the human organism has a high and holy use, a use within the moral order of His Kingdom.

The other attitude towards matters of sex which is as common as it is un-Christian, is that which may be described as unabashed animalism. This view sees the sex relationship either simply as nature's way of propagating the species, or as something to be exploited for the sensual pleasure it may yield. In some form or other this base form of materialism begrimes with its foul fingers much of the life of our day. It provides copy for the newspapers, subjects for nasty plays and films, themes for third-rate novelists, material for morbid and ignorant amateur psychologists; it muddies the minds of boys and girls, degrades friendship, spoils marriages, breaks up homes, ruins health, and is the direct cause of the monster evils of prostitution and venereal disease. It is a canker that has before now destroyed empires, and is still capable, if unchecked, of gnawing away the vitals of our modern civilization.

It is the main assumption behind all this mass of evil which no Christian can entertain for a moment. Most of what is wrong in sex relationships to-day, as at all times, is due to the idea, and the fallacious idea, that man is after all an animal, and cannot be expected to free himself wholly from animal instincts and animal pleasures, and that therefore an evil such as prostitution is quite inevitable. I have sometimes noticed that men of high ideals, themselves straight and clean, voice, or at least accept, the view that sexual vice must be; that it has an almost normal place in the community, and that for the ordinary virile man it is a natural and practically legitimate satisfaction of a universal physical need. They do not seem seriously to face the question that to satisfy such a need in such a way must

involve the utter degradation of a large number of women, with the infinitely terrible outrage on personality which that degradation entails." The fallacy, the complete wrong-headedness—as I see it—of that view of vice lies in the way in which it isolates man's physical capacities and functions from other parts of his being. It says, in effect, that because man is descended from an animal it is only "natural" that he should in some ways behave like one. If this argument is sound, then we might well go into the street and imitate a puppy chasing its tail, or wolf our food in a solitary corner like a dog with a bone. Yet ordinary human decency knows perfectly well that the fact of a man's animal ancestry is no kind of justification for his breaking the higher laws which govern him as a human being. And Christianity has always proclaimed that the essential thing in every man, and every woman, is his kinship with God and not his affinity with the beasts of the field.

Not in sex matters only, but at a hundred different points in life, we are ~~always~~ being confronted by these two tremendous alternatives. We are given the choice between humanity and animalism; we are free to follow the higher road or the lower, and those who choose with Christ's men will find a hard battle and a stiff climb before them. The Christian way in sex relationships leads to uplands of unimaginable beauty and wonder, but the path is steep and there are no short cuts. The demands are severe, like those of which Gareth and his companions were warned by the old Seer as they stood for the first time, astonished and expectant, outside the gateway of King Arthur's wonder city:

Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou become
A thrall to his enchantments, for the King
Will bind thee by such vows, as is a shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the which
No man can keep; but, so thou dread to swear,
Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide
Without, among the cattle of the field.

II

Christianity asserts about sex two great constructive principles, principles that are bound up with its belief in the absolute value of human personality and its synthesis of spiritual and material. It says, on the one hand, that men and women are complementary, each sex filling up that which is lacking in the other, and each with its own contribution to make to the common good of human living. Sex is, in fact, "part of the great rhythm of life, running through all the higher creation." "Human-kind has been created male and female, and those of different sex can and must help each other in a manner impossible for those of the same sex. That is the glory of the world and its shame." And it is noteworthy that many of the finest men and women, who have contributed much to the life of their generations, have found in Christ their ideal of man and of woman. He appeals to what is feminine in woman as well as to what is virile in man. And it is, in the last resort, His teaching and His principles that have at length won an almost universal recognition of women's special worth and work in the world to-day.

The other great Christian principle is that, in all personal relationships between men and women, sex is sacramental. By "sacramental" I mean this: that that physical something which marks off the relationships between man and woman from those between man and man or woman and woman is never, ideally, *merely* physical or sensuous, but always a symbol, a token, an expression of a deeper moral and spiritual relationship. This view of sex contact is inherent in Christian thinking which, with Christ, sees all the visible world as the expression of infinite mind, and man's body as the expression of man's soul. On this view love means a spiritual union, of which marriage is the supreme sacrament. Here, at its highest and noblest, is "the instinct to create, going forth in the power of love, proving

to us day by day that only love can create, bringing us nearer to the Divine power, who is Love, and who created the heaven and the earth." Any physical passion which is enjoyed as an end in itself, and is no sacrament of true love, is a revolting and degrading thing, akin to—indeed lower than—the intercourse of animals.

This "sacramental" view of sex has been cogently and wisely expressed in a pamphlet put out by the British Council of Churches; it is a passage worth quoting: "Christians are not alone in believing that the act of sexual union can never be one of merely biological significance. Indeed, throughout history, until quite recent times, men have commonly regarded it as having the most far-reaching moral, social and even religious implications. If man is, as he has commonly been held to be, a creation standing astride the gulf which separates spirit and matter, if he is neither merely a physical organism nor yet a pure spirit, but a soul-body, an incarnate spirit, it follows that every act of his must in some degree proceed from his spirit and issue through his body, so that both aspects of his nature are involved. Even such simple every-day actions as eating, drinking, and writing have a 'spiritual' significance, or, in Christian language, have a sacramental character. Sexual intercourse presents this truth in its most intense form."¹

III

This kind of Christian sacramentalism is the only safe guide in sex relationships of every kind. It is the source and strength of that quiet chivalry in every-day intercourse which is still the birthright, and often the practice, of the ordinary Englishman. It seems to me mere churlishness to argue, as men sometimes argue, that the women of our day have claimed to enjoy men's rights and to do men's work, therefore let them take their chance in life's rough and

¹ *Home and Family Life*, p. 33.

tumble, without special favour or consideration. Whatever deserved equality of work and status they may have attained, they still remain in a real sense the "weaker sex," and should be conceded that "courtesy of strength to weakness" which is the essence of true chivalry. It is good to see this chivalry in tube or 'bus; on the whole it still persists, amidst the austerities and discomforts of war-time and the hardly less grim post-war period. There are exceptions; like the man who, sitting in a crowded 'bus, and asked by his friend sitting next to him why he sat there, with his eyes tight shut, replied, "Oh! I can't bear to see the women standing."

This Christian sacramentalism is, further, the guiding principle in all true friendships between men and women. It is probably true to say that such friendship, which is one of the most beautiful and wonderful things in human experience, is more possible to-day than it has ever been before. In the days of our fathers and grandfathers it was thought very important that the relations between men and women should always be what was called "proper," with the result that they often became self-conscious, stilted, affected, and even stupid. In our day there is a strong reaction against those Victorian ideas and manners. This reaction is very natural, and much of it is sane and sound. The relation between the sexes to-day is often that of a healthy, happy, clean comradeship, easy and unembarrassed. And there are many men who have cause to bless a blameless friendship with a good woman. But if some profit by this new liberty, others, it must be confessed, have shown themselves less worthy of it. It is all too easy for the man of to-day to fall below the standard which is planted in the conscience and instinct of every true gentleman. There is much—too much—in modern life to make men think that women are in the world just to minister to their amusement and gratification, and to make women acquiesce in that idea. There are those who deliberately give effect to that bestial con-

ception, with a hideous indifference, or a fatal blindness, to the degradation thereby involved for womanhood as well as manhood. There are others who, without descending to vice, have half-unconsciously allowed their thought of the man and woman relationship to be lowered and coarsened. Influenced by the presentment of life which they see at some theatres and cinemas, and in a certain type of novel, they learn to think of love as something easy, exciting, pleasurable, irresponsible, unfettered by ordinary restraints, something to be gazed at, feasted on, dissected, toyed with; and so they come to play with love in their own experience, and thus both work grievous hurt on other lives, and for themselves, fritter away in little bits, cheaply and unthinkingly, that which is the very highest thing in all the capacity and heritage of their manhood. This is the real harm in flirtation—flirtation that is something more than merely “innocent.” It takes without giving; or it gives that which it has no right to give. By separating physical from spiritual it exploits and degrades human personality. Far otherwise is it with the man who is mindful of the dictates of true chivalry. His whole thought of womanhood is on a different level, breathes another atmosphere. For him, love is a high and holy thing, to be revered, not played with. For him, all that womanhood is and may be, the tender grace and charm, the beauty of form and face, the appeal of her dependence, the subtle surprises of her companionship, the ministries of her sympathy, the wonder of her friendship, the selfless glory of her love—all this he sees to be God’s sheer gift for the blessing of humanity. Something of this vision, this instinct, will be at the back of his mind in all his contact with the women he knows and sees. And, therefore, his one guiding principle as he meets and mixes with them will be—*reverence*. The foundation of all true friendship, between man and man, and woman and woman, and most of all between man and woman, is reverence for human personality.

He who has learnt to see all sex relationships in this light and from this angle will have a sure principle to guide him in the great experience of courtship and marriage. He will know how to fill up "love" with its true content, and will have no truck with the lust which borrows love's name and walks in its guise. It was Jesus and His new order of goodness that first set love free from lust; and it is He, and His, who to-day are strong to resist any attempts to reduce love again to that ancient and terrible slavery. Because love is sacramental, and linked with the love of God, marriage is manifestly the highest and most sacred relationship into which two human beings can enter. It is of necessity permanent, not only because of the deep-down human desire for stability in personal relationships, but even more because the mutual giving of two personalities cannot in the nature of the case be temporary; when love gives it gives for ever and not for a time. Moreover, this mutual giving issues, normally, in the inevitably permanent responsibilities of family life. The Marriage Service emphasizes and symbolizes the fact that this permanence cannot be ensured nor these responsibilities duly discharged unless the human love is shot through and through with the love of God. It has been truly said that, "We want our love to be divine before we can undertake the whole happiness of another human being."

But what of the failures? What of the terribly numerous instances where there never was any real love between the two joined together, or where that love has been killed and the marriage bond has become a mockery? The spectacle has been sadly frequent in these war and post-war years; that there should be something like 40,000 divorce cases awaiting judgment (in 1946) may well raise fears as to the stability of the most vital of institutions, the family. No doubt the unnatural conditions of war-time, with many hurried marriages followed by years of enforced separation, have been a powerful contributory cause of the breaking of the marriage bond. Moreover there seems to have sprung

up in some quarters a kind of "limited liability" notion of marriage which works much harm; it is forgotten, or ignored, that fidelity, an absolute and permanent commitment of person to person, is of the essence of all true marriage. If estrangement should arise, then, in the absence of such complete commitment, one or other partner, may begin to ask, "What is there to be faithful to—now that this, that or the other thing has gone?" And there is no satisfactory answer.

In the face of this situation the Christian Church has no option but to stand absolutely firm on the principle that marriage means a lifelong union: "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part." But it is not enough to proclaim that principle from the house-tops; what is needed is a campaign of enlightenment and instruction, carried out by clergy and ministers, teachers and educationists, and not least by parents themselves, to dispel some of the clouds of ignorance and misunderstanding which envelop the whole subject of sex and marriage. Many clergy make a practice—an admirable practice—of establishing personal contacts with couples who come to "put up the banns," giving them regular instruction, and helping them to see that their partnership is "for keeps," that their true happiness is to be "yoked" together "till death us do part." "A yoke," writes the Bishop of Exeter in a printed "message" put into the hands of all who come to be married in any of his churches, "is not a chain or a fetter. Country folk know better than that. A yoke is used to spread the burden, to even the load. It helps two to do together what one could not do alone. So marriage 'for keeps' halves the sorrows and doubles the joys."

But, if the worst should come to the worst, and the marriage breaks down seemingly beyond hope of repair, what then? What is the Christian to think or to do, confronted by disaster of that kind? Let it be said clearly that, where

there is failure of any kind, the Christian has no alternative but to go all conceivable lengths in the effort to forbear and forgive, to mend and heal and repair and restore. Such effort is due to the community; for marriage is a social thing, and the community is deeply concerned in its success or in its failure. And it is dictated by the Christian law of forgiveness, even as it is rendered more hopeful by the power of Christianity to transform and uplift. With patient and honest endeavour there may be, in this way, and there often is, at least a partial rebuilding of what threatened to be complete ruin. Where, however, after such honest attempt, or owing to irreparable circumstance, there is still complete and utter failure, then there should surely be release.¹ What good can come of pretending that a marriage is real and sacred *when it is not?*²

IV

Two things may be said in conclusion. One is this: that neither marriage nor its debased counterfeits are the only outlet for the sexual instinct. It is precisely there that we human beings differ from the animals. Modern psychologists are probably right in tracing a close connection between our sex instincts and our creative, artistic, and even religious, capacities. There is something in man that craves to create, to express; and, even in our semi-pagan, semi-civilized Western world, there are hundreds of fields of useful and beneficent human activity in which this deep desire in men and women may find release and outlet. There are many unmarried teachers, parsons, nurses, sec-

¹ In a properly ordered society such a release would *not* be, as it often is now, "good copy" for unclean newspapers to purvey to the dirty-minded among their readers.

² Cf. some wise words of Miss Maude Royden (in a book now out of print): "What I do say is that in Church and State we should concentrate all our efforts on helping men and women to a wise, enlightened, noble conception of marriage before they enter on it, and not on a futile and immoral attempt to hold them together by a mere legal contract when all that made it valid has fled."

retaries and others doing splendid work in the world to-day, who find in that work a satisfying and compensating scope for the vital powers in them which could, in other circumstances, have made them good husbands and wives and fathers and mothers. This is part of the answer to those who say that for civilized human beings continence is impossible and vice inevitable.¹ Given tasks congenial, useful, engrossing, continence is within anyone's grasp, "without exhaustion and without asceticism." The appeal of sexuality is infinitely reinforced when it clamours at tired and empty minds.

The strong and decisive part of the idealist's answer to the "realist" in sexual questions is the assertion, backed by centuries of Christian experience, that the goodness of Jesus, set forth as the standard for the plain man, would be outrageously impossible were it not *infectious*. We cannot copy it but we can catch it: catch it simply by spending time in His company. This is no mere optimistic theory: it is tested fact. Men and women in every generation have found in Him, as they still find in Him, the power-centre of purity. Sex is no problem, no obsession, no tyrant when *He* is seen and known; *He* is, always, the liberator, the purifier, the transformer; there is an uncounted number of men and women alive to-day whose mind and body have been "made clean by His body," who have "found themselves," as men, as women, through touch with His human, living, Divine self. From the most sordid slums of human thinking and human living there is always one way out—the way of Jesus.

¹ An equally common fallacy asserts that continence is harmful and results in loss of sexual power. Medical science makes short work of this view. Sir James Paget says: "Chastity does no harm to mind or body; its discipline is excellent." Dr. Barton says: "Continence is possible, and not only compatible with, but conducive to health." Dr. Clifford Allbutt says: "Continence, so far from being harmful, is not harmful at any age; and in adolescence and early adult life it is physically and mentally economical. Whether in married or in celibate life, science gives its imperious sanction to purity of heart and clean habits of thought." (Quoted in *A Woman's Honour*, by Spencer Elliott, S.P.C.K., "Straight Talks Series.")

X

Jesus went about . . . teaching . . . and preaching . . . and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. . . . As many as touched Him were made perfectly whole. ST. MATTHEW iv, 23; xiv, 36.

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you? 1 CORINTHIANS vi, 19.

To this day, we know, the entire creation sighs and throbs with pain; and not only so, but even we ourselves, who have the Spirit as a foretaste of the future, even we sigh to ourselves as we wait for the redemption of the body that means our full sonship. ROMANS viii, 22, 23 (MOFFATT).

The Soul and Body make a perfect Man, when the Soul commands wisely, or rules lovingly, and cares profitably, and provides plentifully, and conducts charitably that Body which is its partner and inferior. But if the Body shall give Laws, and by the violence of the appetite, first abuse the Understanding, and then possess the superior portion of the Will and Choice, the Body and the Soul are not apt company, and the man is a fool and miserable. If the Soul rules not, it cannot be a companion: either it must govern or be a slave. JEREMY TAYLOR

If you wish to be well, you must live on sixpence a day, and earn it yourself. ABERNETHY

Several of the greatest psychologists . . . tend towards the view that the source of power is to be regarded as some impulse that works through us, and is not of our own making. . . . We are not merely receptacles but *channels* of energy. Life and power is not so much contained in us, it *courses through us*. Man's might is not to be measured by the stagnant water in the well, but by the limitless supply from the clouds of heaven. J. A. HADFIELD

CHAPTER X

CHRISTIANITY AND HEALTH

THE population of the world of our day is computed to be somewhere about sixteen hundred million. It is a safe guess that, of these, many millions suffer from some form of disease or physical infirmity. It is not a guess but a certainty to say that the greater part of all this disease is preventable and could be abolished. For a long time past medical science has been moving steadily towards this conclusion. And during recent years this conviction has been strongly reinforced by fresh and far-reaching psychological investigations. There is a fairly general agreement by now that in the conquest of disease the healing and strengthening of the mind of man (using the word "mind" in its widest sense) is going to play an all-important, perhaps a decisive, part. This conviction lies behind all the different "faith-healing" movements that spring into being from time to time. It is worth adding that we should probably be right in regarding these movements as part of a very deep and widespread modern revolt in the interests of the spiritual against the materialistic bias of the nineteenth century.

I

What should be the *Christian* theory and practice with regard to health and disease? These pages are an attempt to suggest some answer to that question. First of all, the Christian revelation of God would seem to suggest this clear guiding principle: that God's will for man is that he should be whole and sound in body and mind. How indeed could God conceivably "will" the alternative—a child with

paralysis, a woman dying of cancer, a sanatorium full of consumptives, and so on? How can "Christians" still continue to think and speak of these things as being "the will of God"? If Christ is a true guide, disease is not normal but abnormal and Christian "salvation" is intended to be for body as well as "soul." The "abundant life" which Christ brought, and brings, to men would be sadly incomplete if it had nothing to do with men's bodies. If it is true that God made man in His own image, if it is true that on this earth God actually showed Himself to men as a human being with a human body, then there must surely be some great purpose of good for man's physical frame as well as for his moral character.

There is, in this connection, a fact about the earthly life of Jesus Christ which has a remarkable significance. It is that He attacked disease wherever He found it, as being an evil thing, and commissioned His disciples to do the same. He seemed to see disease as failure in wholeness and completeness; indeed, he appeared to regard it as being, like sin, an intruder upon human life as God means it to be lived. He was at pains to make men understand that God concerns Himself with physical things as well as spiritual, and that it is within the scheming of His love and care that a man's body should be fed and clothed and duly cared for (cf. St. Luke xii, 22f.). It is not that He isolated physical need and ministered to it as a separate thing. He knew, and in all His healing work acted on the knowledge, that soul and body form together one animate organism. He forgave a man's sins and healed his disease as integral parts of one process.¹ Nor did He ever isolate man's "soul," as if the saving of it has nothing to do with the tenement of clay it inhabits. The ascetics who, in the name of religion, have ignored or despised the body, or even maltreated it in revolting and degrading fashion, have misunderstood Christianity

¹ Cf. the healing of the paralytic "borne of four" in Mark ii, and other instances.

and have much to learn from psychology. Not so are man's greatest moral and mental conquests achieved. As many of us know, from experiences sometimes humiliating, mental health and physical health are very closely related. "A man cannot," someone has said, "be a saint, a poet, or a lover unless he has recently had something to eat." It is not impossible, as I shall hope to show later on, to extract good out of the evil of illness; but that does not in the least mean that invalids are more likely to be good and pious than hearty people with robust health. Jesus seems to have given no countenance to the idea "that sickness is an affliction sent by God in order that the poor in spirit might become more godly."¹ He came to liberate human personality from the fetters, physical and moral, which bind it and cramp it; the Kingdom of God which He came to found was clearly to be begun on earth, and was intended to involve the redemption of man *and* of his material environment. This sacredness of physical personality was well understood by St. Paul and the early Christians, even if the Church has allowed it to become obscured since. "Know ye not," cries St. Paul—and his protest is as timely to-day as it was when he uttered it—"that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you? . . . Therefore glorify God in your body."²

II

This interdependence of body and soul is, after all, in harmony with the great sacramental principle that runs all through the universe, the principle that matter is, always and everywhere, the expression of spirit. The glory of a sunset can never be described or defined in terms of the physical occurrences which are its immediate cause. A picture has a meaning far beyond the mere marks of pigment on canvas of which it materially consists. The sig-

¹ L. Dougall, *The Interpreter*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, p. 40.

² 1 Corinthians vi, 19, 20. The words which follow in A.V., "and in your spirit, which are God's," are of doubtful genuineness; they do not occur in some MSS.

nificance of a sonata of Beethoven is to be found not in the piano's leaping notes and vibrating strings, but in the mind activity of composer, player and listener. This marriage of mind and spirit reaches a wonderful climax in the human body. The brain and the nerves of the body are themselves indescribably marvellous; but when we ask *how* what we call a "thought" arises or is stored in a material brain-cell, we find ourselves in the presence of a mystery that has never yet been explained. "We not only do not know," says one who has made a close study of this subject,¹ "we cannot even imagine, how a thought can be registered in a speck of protoplasm, or how a sensation can travel along a fibre. How can matter think? Or how can a syllogism store itself in a cell? There is no analogy to help us in the understanding of this. We could understand a ghost thinking, perhaps, because thought is a spiritual process. But how can a combination of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen think, or feel, or aspire, or be sorry? We look at some minute filament of a neuron under the microscope, and we ask, How can the sensation of pain be carried along this, and how can pain be felt by the cell to which it runs? We look at the grey matter of the brain and we ask, How can millions of memories be impressed upon its millions of cells? And all such questions resolve themselves into the one mystery that spirit is incarnate in matter, that a brain cell is not merely what we can see, but is also something else and something infinitely more important."

Now it is both common sense and common practice to use things without being able necessarily to understand them fully. Many of us would have to do without food and heat and light if our use of these necessities depended on our being able personally to comprehend the science of them. Similarly we may safely accept and act on the principle that the mind rules the body; and that the most hopeful way to maintain health and cure disease is to help

¹ Dr. Percy Dearmer, *Body and Soul*, p. 24.

the mind to fulfil its proper function. This mental guidance and guardianship of the body is for the greater part carried out by the subconscious mind, which oversees most of the normal physical functions of the body without our having consciously to bother about them at all. It is with this under-mind that the doctor must co-operate if his assistance is to be effectual. When anyone is ill, it is, ultimately, "something within" that does the healing, with much or little stimulus and assistance from outside. There is a deep truth in the common expression, "Let Nature do her work." Dr. Dearmer quotes a considered medical opinion which admits that "but for the natural tendencies of the body towards health when disturbed by disease, the art of healing could not exist."¹ "Medical science only becomes possible," remarks a modern writer, "when there is an implicit belief that disease is not intended to happen and therefore is curable."

This dominating part played by the under-mind in the promotion and maintenance of health does not in the least mean, as some mind-cure movements have mistakenly taken it to mean, that the arts of the physician and surgeon can forthwith be dispensed with. Many of the factors in disease, as in accidents, are purely material; bad drains, filthy houses, foul air, poisonous or unsuitable food, disease germs carried and spread by insects or by human beings. It is said to be a fact that "colds" are never found in the Arctic regions, or where there is no infection from people living in insanitary conditions. All these causes of disease are removable and will be removed when human apathy, human wrong-doing, and human ignorance cease, and men learn to co-operate with God to make His will effective in the world. And the material factor is not confined to physical environment. There are constantly, in men's bodies, obstructions that may be removed, poisons counteracted, mendings and adjustments and joinings manipulated

¹ Op. cit., p. 73.

by the surgeon's skill or the physician's prescription; all such material assistance having, as already suggested, the main purpose of co-operating with Nature's own healing forces. It is both unscientific and un-Christian to suppose any antithesis between "spiritual healing" and the work of the medical profession.

Of recent years much investigation has been made of a further and even more effective way in which the under-mind can be assisted to carry on its health-giving work, and that is the way of what is known as "suggestion." There are many kinds of "suggestion" that come within the experience of all of us. Constantly seen advertisements, not perhaps consciously noticed, make a "suggestion" to our minds on the strength of which we buy a certain soap or travel by a certain route. From newspapers, from common talk, from the observed habits and practices of other people, we frequently receive "suggestions" which, without our realizing it, profoundly modify our own thought and conduct. This extreme susceptibility of the under-mind has for a long time been utilized by doctors in the interests of health and healing; the scientific application of deliberate suggestion to another mind, both in hypnosis and otherwise, has already proved, in the hands of a skilful practitioner, an immense boon to many a patient. Recent investigation and experiment have gone further, and have shown that it is quite possible for the ordinary person, if he sets about it in the right way, to increase considerably his physical well-being, and even (to some extent) to cure illness, not by passively receiving "suggestions" from others, but by himself "suggesting" to his own subconscious mind. About the whole idea there is indeed a fundamental commonsense. As the late Canon Pym pointed out in an admirable book (now out of print), *Psychology and the Christian Life* (the quotation is a useful summary, in ordinary language, of what "suggestion" is and does): "Our own individual experience

proves to us . . . [the practical power of 'suggestion']. Again and again I have done a difficult thing which, humanly speaking, depended on my own efforts, because, as I am convinced, I set out with the certainty that I could do it; in so approaching the task I was suggesting to myself that it 'could be done,' 'was as good as done.' Again and again I have failed at the same thing through no conscious slackening of effort, but simply because I approached it despondently—'I suppose I must tackle this, but . . .' On those 'buts' hang my failures in rows. Nothing will convince me of any other explanation of my experience than this: in making the suggestion to myself 'I can,' I set in motion the wheels of a machinery whose driving-power helped to achieve success; the idea of success was transformed into successful action. When I suggested to myself at the outset doubtful success or practically certain failure, I shut the doors on power at my disposal, or, worse, initiated an idea which in spite of my efforts translated itself into actual failure. Many of us by personal experience have come to realize this; when we read it in psychological books we murmur, 'Exactly so. I've always thought as much.' But there is more to learn. This power can be wielded more deliberately. There are certain times when we are in a more receptive state for such suggestions than we are at others. Again, the state in which we are most receptive can be induced deliberately by ourselves; we can select the ideas which shall be introduced or suggested for our subconscious mind to transform into fact. We can gain greater control. We can discard worthless habits and fashion useful ones. We can develop capacities which we did not formerly believe to exist in us. We can unlock reserves of power hitherto unrealized."

III

It is, then, broadly true to say that there resides in every-

body a deep-down "force" or "life energy" which makes for health,¹ and which is capable of stimulus and direction. Now a Christian, considering this fact and some of its ramifications, may well ask himself the question, "Where does God come in in this mind healing?" In answer to this question it may be frankly stated, first of all, that the mind can, and often does, with or without the assistance of doctor or "healer" or other agency, set this subterranean force at work without any conscious reference to God at all. Further, it is quite possible for the healing process to be accompanied by what a Christian would regard as entirely erroneous ideas of God and Christ and the universe. "Christian Science" is a case in point. No one would deny that Christian Science has brought new health and hope to many a broken man and woman. But, despite its name, it mixes up with its healing work views and theories which are neither Christian nor scientific. It is touched with pantheism; it believes in an irrational dualism of matter and spirit; drawing a sharp distinction between the "historical Jesus" and the "Christ of ideal truth," it recognizes no real Incarnation; and, denying the reality of sin, it has no place in its creed for the cross of Christ. There are other "New Thought" societies, and "health" prophets, who likewise are responsible for some good, with much error and some evil mixed in with it. With regard to such movements and experiments, Christ gives His followers two clear bits of advice. On the one hand, He warns us that men may have wonderful psychic and healing powers without goodness; because someone is able to make us well it does not in the least follow that he is a true guide to God and the things of God.² On the other hand, He warns us against belittling or despising those who cast out devils in His name, because they do not share our views of Him (St. Luke

¹ For simplicity's sake I describe in terms of a thing that which is, to speak more accurately, a relation.

² Cf. Matt. vii, 22, 23, R.V. marg. "Powers" and "works" are technical New Testament words to describe healing miracles.

ix, 49, 50). But, whatever their religious views, He would clearly condemn those who, in practice, seek bodily health for purely selfish ends. No follower of the Crucified can have anything to do with a mere gospel of comfort; and that is what, thinly disguised as religion, the message of some of the new healing movements amounts to. "There are whole schools of thought," remarks a caustic commentator, "to whom the last word of a really spiritual religion is that people should murmur to themselves, 'Health, Wealth, Beauty,' while dressing in the morning."

What then should be the distinctively Christian view and practice in these matters? I should answer thus: the Christian recognizes that this mystic force in man that makes for health is God's own gift, is indeed part of the very life of God; and, humbly and confidently, he claims that gift, not just because it is pleasant to feel well, but in order that he may bring a whole and fit personality, fit in body and soul, to the service of God and His Kingdom. It may well be asked, How far are Christians generally availing themselves of this tremendous possibility? Are not large numbers living far below their potential level of vitality for body and soul? It must honestly be confessed that there has been serious failure here, individually and corporately. Again and again we sit down under the dominance of disease and call it pious resignation when we ought to fight and conquer it. There are thousands of saintly men and women who, contracting an illness, passively and thoughtlessly accept it as the will of God when they ought, from the very first moment of its onset, to enlist the mighty divine resources against it. Many religious people, when they suffer from bodily ailments, put much more faith in diet and drugs than they do in prayer. We see that sin is not God's will; Christ would have us see that likewise disease is not His will, and would have us use a faith, individually and jointly, that means an opening up of the whole being to God, an invasion by His Spirit of every

recess, physical and spiritual of the entire personality. That is the Christian's ideal—a God-filled personality, not for health's sake, but for God's sake, and for the sake of his brother men. That motive of service will lead him into situations of physical strain and contagious disease which the mere devotee of health would cautiously avoid; but in those situations, as in all the changes and chances of daily life, his receptiveness of the life of God will give him a power of endurance, and immunity from illness, a deep unruffled peace of mind,¹ a strong, clean wholeness in body and spirit, that will make him a purveyor of health and happiness wherever he goes. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." In this same connection it may be pointed out that on the Christian lies the duty, not only of fighting sickness with faith, but also, in his ordinary daily life, of taking pains to keep fit, to be at his best physically, in order the better to play the part and do the work that God has given him. We should hear much less of "nerves" and break-downs and over-strain, especially in the whole field of "religious" service, if people—particularly middle-aged people—would treat their bodies with a judicious blend of faith and common sense; if, for instance, they took more care (without fussiness) about rest and sleep and diet and fresh air and exercise and recreation. It is wonderful what a run before breakfast, or some good exercises before and after the bath, will do not only for the digestion, but for a man's prayer capacity.

It must be admitted that these aspects of Christian living and Christian service have not always been duly emphasized by the Church, which has preached a "salvation" that has had little to do with the body or bodily conditions; hence the enormous success of healing movements outside

¹ The late William James, the great psychologist, has said "The sovereign cure for worry is religious faith." Cf. *Creative Prayer*, p. 32: "To the soul that is wholly bent upon God, a thousand fretting cares and vexing problems which tear the lives of others in pieces simply cease to exist."

the Church. There are, at last, welcome signs of a change coming. And it may come to pass, in a generation, if the Church can be true to Christ and swift to meet men's needs, that religion and science will at last work hand in hand in the conquest of disease and the betterment of all physical life.

There are welcome signs in these days of a growing co-operation between the Church and all healing agencies, between parson and doctor. It is increasingly realized that the different elements in a human personality cannot be divided into separated compartments, the physician dealing with physical ailments, the priest with spiritual. It is a complete personality that stands in need of help, with all its physical, mental and spiritual environment. To treat the disease *in vacuo* is not enough: treatment must be devised for the *person* who has his own special reactions to the disease, the treatment possibly demanding the services of a team of experts working in collaboration—doctor, parson and psychologist. To take an obvious and not uncommon instance. Schoolmasters fairly frequently have to deal with obstinate cases of kleptomania. Formerly such cases were usually treated by severe punishment or even expulsion. Nowadays they are more often handed over to medical psychologists, and a much more scientific treatment, revealing the spiritual origins of the disease, results, in a large number of cases, in a complete and lifelong cure. Founded by the late Archbishop Temple, there is now in being "The Church's Council of Healing," which is endeavouring, with growing success, to provide a common basis for various healing movements which stand on Christian foundations, and to draw such movements and guilds into closer fellowship and co-operation.¹

¹ For further information apply to the Council's Secretary, 124 Addiscombe Road, Croydon

IV

At this point a question emerges to which an answer must be sought. If, as has been strongly asserted, health is God's Will, then why is there so much disease? And why do Christians seem to be as liable to illness as other people? The plain and obvious answer is that a vast proportion of the people in the world, through wilful wrongdoing or through ignorance, are living out of harmony with the Will of God and disobeying those laws, moral and physical, which condition soundness in body and mind. It is safe to say that all the disease in the world is due to sin or ignorance or to a blend of both. Indeed ignorance is often more terribly punished than sin; and the guiltless suffer with the guilty. "The bad building of the Tower of Siloam does mean that it falls some day on casual passers-by, and anyone, good or bad, may be involved in the ruin." It is selfishness or thoughtlessness or sheer lack of knowledge that causes or tolerates the conditions—whether a filthy house or an overcrowded room, or an ill-ventilated factory, or a mosquito-breeding stagnant pool—in which disease germs thrive; and it is a similar cause that makes the human body an easy prey to their attack. In such a close environment of sin and disease it may well be difficult, if not impossible, for any particular individual to maintain perfect health, especially if, as a Christian, he refuses to escape from unhealthy circumstances; he will claim his health from God in the midst of his lot wherever it may lie. Accordingly, while Christianity does unquestionably make for health, it does not follow that if you are ill you are therefore irreligious. Health is not necessarily a sign of spirituality, nor is suffering necessarily the direct result of personal sin. Indeed the suffering caused by sin falls much more often on the innocent than on the guilty; the misery and disease and death caused by drunkenness or

vice or war fall not chiefly on those who do the sin or cause the war, but on the drunkard's family and the profligate's children and on the men who fight, together with those who mourn their wounds or death.

Suppose then, despite a truly Christian endeavour to take hold of the life of God for body as well as soul, you find yourself on your back with influenza, or laid aside for some time with some serious illness or disease, what is to be done about it? I suggest that the Christian attitude is to go on believing, to the uttermost, that God means you to be well, and to persist in every attempt, conscious and subconscious, to take hold of His life and health. If, through causes within or without you which you cannot ascertain or remove, the illness persists, then for your strength and courage and comfort, you have the certainty that God in Christ stands by you in your trial; He is all the time utterly with you in these physical conditions for which neither He nor (so far as you can see) yourself are responsible. And to have Him by you, on a sick bed or on the field of battle, infecting you with courage and hope and enabling you to see your own little bit of trouble over against the whole landscape of life and the great sky of His love overhead—that is the way in which you may quite certainly extract good out of a bad situation.

In making this great claim I should not like to seem to belittle the grievous, and largely unanswerable, problem of human suffering. And we can only dare to think we see light in the darkness because of God's action in Jesus Christ—Christ dying and living again. If the Cross means anything, it means that God is dealing, on a cosmic scale, with the intertwining problems of men's wickedness and men's suffering. God is, so to speak, getting at the crux of the matter from the inside. Some years ago a man of standing who had held a position of great trust was suspected of fraud, brought to trial, convicted, and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. Shortly afterwards a

friend was sympathizing with his wife, and asked her if she didn't desire to find some way of dissociating herself and her family from her husband's guilt and disgrace. She merely replied, gently and simply, "Thank God I can share it."

"If I go up to heaven Thou art there: if I go down to hell Thou art there also." I sometimes think that is the most wonderful text in the whole Bible. Christianity says that God follows His children down into their nethermost hells of sin and suffering; stands by them there in the depths and saves them there. Millions of men and women have found this to be true, to their deep relief and comfort. "A thousand things can happen to you," says Dr. Leslie Weatherhead in one of his books, "which are not the Will of God; but nothing can happen to you which cannot be captured for God."

"Thou, Lord, art my hope; Thou hast set my house of defence very high." "There shall no evil happen unto thee. . . ." "If God be for us who can be against us?" Both Old and New Testaments are full of the faith that sees God in the night. Suffering can degrade; but, as St. Paul with his "thorn in the flesh" and many Christians since have found, it equally can ennoble, and unveil to the seeking soul Him for whom suffering was the condition of His work and the threshold of His glory.

V

I would emphasize once more, in a few closing sentences, the need, in the matter of which this chapter treats, for a new quality of faith: a faith which approximates more closely to the faith of Jesus Himself. He clearly meant, and means, us to draw upon the limitless resources of the eternal God in something of the way in which He himself did this. In the last resort, our failure in fighting sin and

disease is due to lack of belief in God. We so easily tend to think of faith almost entirely in terms of theology, or as an attitude of spirit essentially passive; whereas faith really involves a tremendous uprising of the whole personality *to take hold of God*; it is "the deliberate opening of the whole spirit to God, the making of our entire human nature—reason, memory, emotion, imagination, intuition, love—into a channel of communication with God; it uses all the capacities of man for this Divine friendship; what speech and sight, and touch, and mutual thought are between lovers, that is faith between man and God."

A man with faith like this wields a power for good far beyond the confines of his own character. He becomes a veritable distributing centre of the Life of God; he creates an atmosphere of health and happiness wherever he goes; he infects his fellow-men with courage and energy and hope in the age-long battle with evil and leads them on to victory. This kind of man brings more stones for the building of the City of God than all its professional architects and masons of his generation.

XI

Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ST. LUKE xii, 27.

If thou hast two loaves, sell one and buy a lily.

CHINESE PROVERB

Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty. ISAIAH xxxiii, 17.

I thought that I had lost Thee; but behold!

Thou comest to me from the horizon low,
Across the fields outspread with green and gold—

Fair carpet for Thy feet to come and go.

Whence I know not, or how to me Thou art come!—

Not less my spirit with calm bliss doth glow,
Meeting Thee only thus, in nature vague and dumb.

GEORGE MACDONALD

From sky to sod
The world's unfolded blossom smells of God.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

The beautiful is essentially the spiritual making itself known sensuously. G. R. APPLETON

The universe is to be valued because there is truth in it and beauty in it; and we live to discover the truth and the beauty no less than to do what is right. CLUTTON BROCK

O then indeed I knew how closely knit
To stars and flowers we are;—how many means
Of grace there are for those that never lose
Their sense of membership in this divine
Body of God;—for those that all their days
Have walked in quiet communion with the Life
That keeps the common secret of the sun,
The wind, the silence and the heart of man.
There is one God, one Love, one everlasting
Mystery of Incarnation, one creative
Passion behind the many-coloured veil.

ALFRED NOYES

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ALFRED NOYES

CHRISTIANITY AND BEAUTY

IT is early summer; and this is one of the days when our English country shows what it can do when it really tries. I have escaped for one day from the daily round and ceaseless toil, like a swimmer under water coming up to breathe, and for a few hours have fled away as far as might be from bricks and mortar. . . . Surely there never was such a wonderful bursting into summer as has befallen this year, when, after those long bleak weeks through March and April spring and summer have suddenly met and kissed each other amid a blaze of beauty and a riot of colour such as even England can hardly have often seen. I write in a shady nook in one of England's most stately and historic parks; the trees are dressed in the softest, shimmering green, with cool, velvet shadows on the turf beneath them, and between them vistas of gentle grassy slopes against a far background of misty blue where sky and horizon meet. The lanes through which I have passed are lined with red and white may, the woods are spread with carpets of bluebells, the river meadows with their buttercups are, each of them, a fresh-made field of the cloth of gold. It is one of those days when "in His Temple every thing saith, Glory" (Ps. xxix, 9, R.V.). The beauty of it all stabs at one's heart; there are no words to describe it, no artist could paint it; there is no answer to it save the deep, silent, reverent worship of one's inmost soul. . . .

Through the big west door of the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge, standing open, I can see the evening shadows lying right across the wide lawns. Here, within, all is dim; the wonderful groined roof is only mistily visible; the great screen with its precious burden, that divine organ, looms up dark against the faint glow beyond, while through

the opening, the curtains drawn aside, a dim pathway of soft light leads towards the unseen recesses of the chapel's farther end. A perfect setting for perfect sounds! Those organ notes, mellow and true, send their waves of pure resonance washing along the ancient walls, waves that surely are born in the very deeps of music, and will only break on the shores of eternity. And then the angels sing—or so it seems. From beyond the organ screen comes the sound of many voices, a running stream of pure melody, a rich blend of many-coloured harmony, sequences and cadences of the "unhurrying chase and unperturbed pace" of perfect rhythm. . . . I sit there, motionless, spellbound, with the music flowing sweetly down into the unknown depths of my being. . . .

Those two transcripts of fleeting experience were penned for this chapter when this little book first saw the light. Now, twenty-five years later, I let them stand; however inadequately, they may just suggest the connection between Christianity and beauty. Of the reality of that bond I have no doubt at all; but to write about it at all worthily would tax mightier pens than mine. Most of us no doubt from time to time enjoy such experiences as I have attempted to describe in the foregoing paragraphs; and indeed experiences of that kind—so I find—tend to increase in frequency and intensity as one gets older. And they cannot be described or explained without using the word *beauty*. Like many other words, "beauty" is a term that describes without explaining. All we know is that there is a something about a flower or a landscape, a picture or a building, a song or a play, a face or a character, which appeals with irresistible force to our deepest instincts, and which has an amazing power to charm and heal and inspire and bless. We call this something "beauty," though we cannot define our word; our delight in beauty, like our delight in a joke, is largely indefinable, being joy in "a final good," "ultimate pleasure in something that cannot be explained."

II

Now this chapter is not an essay on the meaning of beauty; that would be a task far beyond the powers of the present writer, nor would it be of any great interest to those who I hope will read this book. All I want to say, as simply as I can, is that God Himself is *in*, and is the ultimate source of, all beauty, just as He is in truth and in goodness—those final values, those “three sisters never sundered without tears”; and that the Christian, so far from finding that Christ and beauty are in some sort of antithesis, will discover, if he seek aright, that his love of Christ and his sense of the beautiful are interwoven in a close and living bond. In Charles Kingsley’s memorable words—and he was a lover of the beautiful beyond most men—“Beauty is God’s handwriting; welcome it therefore in every fair face, every fair sky, every fair flower, and thank Him for it who is the fountain of all loveliness.” These large statements are hardly susceptible of proof; yet I cannot but think that they would be endorsed by all who, in beauty, look for what is spiritual. Clutton Brock, whose teaching on beauty and art, and their relation to religion, deserves the attention of those who are living after his day, boldly claimed that all true perception of beauty depends on a sense of the *personal* in nature, that the real significance of an artist’s work lies in his attempt “to express the personal in that which is not himself,” and that “our joy in his art is a joy in that sense of the personal everywhere which he communicates to us.”¹ The myths and fancies about water-nymphs and fairies bring us, he claims, closer to the heart of things than scientific definitions and æsthetic analysis.

But if nature is in any sense “personal,” what else can

¹ See his valuable essay on “Spiritual Experience,” in *The Spirit*, ed. by B. H. Streeter.

this personal quality be but an expression, in terms of beauty, of the living, loving, eternal God? If the pattern of the lily, the exquisite wings of the butterfly, the unpaintable glories of the sunset, seem to show design, whose design is it but His? If they suggest some Mind, beyond our little minds, to take delight in them, whose is the Mind, whose the delight, but His? Not indeed that nature, or beauty, can ever be a complete and adequate expression of what God is; for that there was needed the further, fuller revelation in a human life.

Moreover, it could hardly be claimed that everything in nature is equally the expression of a divine intention. The familiar phrase "nature red in tooth and claw" may possibly read into nature from our human experiences a consciousness, a memory and anticipation of pain, which are not really there. At the same time, the phrase is a necessary reminder that there is that in the whole natural world which has gone wrong and which, like humanity, needs redemption; St. Paul clearly felt this when he wrote "the physical world was made subject to frustration, not by its own desire, but by the will of the Creator, who in making it so, gave it a hope that it might one day be delivered from its bondage to corruption and made to share the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the created universe has been travailing in the pangs of a new birth right up to this present moment."¹ And it is evident that man is only too capable of imposing something of his own disorder on nature's order; witness his maltreatment of the soil, and the tragedy of the "dustbowls" in America. Yet when all such allowances have been made, and if the Christian outlook on God and the world is true, then we are justified in believing that (to use for once a theological term) God is "immanent" in His creation, and there is a real sense in which the flower, the sunset, the

¹ *The New Testament Letters*, paraphrased by J. W. C. Wand, Bishop of London.

picture, the building, the music are actually expressions of His Spirit. "If He exists at all, the uttermost beauty, the most extreme enchantment, must be His." The Bible is full of this conception. The growing knowledge of God brought with it a keen sense of His manifestation in nature: "He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and His eye seeth every precious thing" (Job xxviii, 10); "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches" (Ps. civ, 24)—the Psalms are full of such passages. "Then was I (the 'Wisdom' of God, personified) by Him (in His creative work) as a master workman . . . rejoicing in His habitable earth" (Prov. viii, 30); and St. Paul carries the same thought further: "All things have been created by Him (Christ) and for Him . . . and all coheres in Him" (Col. i, 16 [Moffatt]). More than all, Christ Himself, in His earthly life, was so evidently sure that this earth was His Father's earth, and that everything true and good and beautiful had its own place in His Father's Kingdom. Notice, in this connection, not only His memorable words about the beauty of the lilies, but the eye for nature that He shows in His parables, and the way in which He clearly loved to be alone with nature—it may well be that, when He climbed the hills to pray, He was drawn as much by the birds and the flowers as by the solitude.

And yet there are those who think that Christ comes as an enemy to all that gives life colour and beauty! Swinburne, speaking doubtless for many a modern "pagan," cries out in fear:

Wilt thou yet take all, Galilæan? But these thou shalt not take,
The laurel, the palms, and the pæan; the breasts of the nymphs in
the brake:

Breasts more soft than a dove's, that tremble with tenderer breath;
And all the wings of the loves; and all the joy before death. . . .

The poet is wrong. It is "the living God" Himself "who richly provides us with all the enjoyments of life" (1 Tim.

vi, 17 [Moffatt]). Christ, calling men away from the routine of their petty lives into the adventure of love, leaves the pagan far behind in the quest for the true glory of human living; and He sees more beauty than the other in any flower for that He knows it to be fashioned and painted by the finger of the living God. Apart from questions of technical excellence, those poets who have this sense of the "immanence" of God get far nearer to the very heart of beauty. Take, for instance, these lines by that true mystic, Evelyn Underhill:

I come in the little things,
Saith the Lord:
Not borne on morning wings
Of majesty, but I have set My Feet
Amidst the delicate and bladed wheat
That springs triumphant in the furrowed sod.
There do I dwell, in weakness and in power;
Not broken or divided, saith our God!
In your strait garden plot I come to flower:
About your porch My Vine,
Meek, fruitful, doth entwine;
Waits, at the threshold, Love's appointed hour.

I come in the little things,
Saith the Lord:
Yea! on the glancing wings
Of eager birds, the softly pattering feet
Of furred and gentle beasts, I come to meet
Your hard and wayward heart. In brown bright eyes
That peep from out the brake, I stand confest.
On every nest
Where feathery Patience is content to brood
And leaves her pleasure for the high emprise
Of motherhood—
There doth My Godhead rest.

I come in the little things,
Saith the Lord:
My starry wings
I do forsake,
Love's highway of humility to take:
Meekly I fit my stature to your need.
In beggar's part
About your gates I shall not cease to plead—
As man, to speak with man—
Till by such art
I shall achieve My Immemorial Plan,
Pass the low lintel of the human heart.¹

¹ Evelyn Underhill, *Immanence*, p. 1 (Dent).

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¹ Evelyn Underhill, *Immanence*, p. 1 (Dent).

III

This book is about every-day religion. I would make the confident assertion that the man who learns to bring Christ into his every-day life is far more keenly appreciative of all lovely things than he ever could be without Him. With the springs of his being made new and clean, he finds himself in blessed harmony with all the beauties of earth and sky:

O glory of the lighted mind—
How dead I'd been, how dumb, how blind.
The running brook, to my new eyes,
Was babbling out of Paradise;
The waters rushing from the rain
Were singing, Christ has risen again. . . .¹

There is no joy in life like that of walking with the living Jesus by the blue sea, or through the wood's green glades, or in the rose garden. . . . Those are the times when you touch and hold life's final certainties.

Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign.
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.²

That is a sensitiveness to beauty and to God which grows—and the Christian will take care that it has the chance to grow. As towards truth and goodness, so towards beauty, he will seek to be increasingly teachable, open-eyed, receptive. And he will find that earth's fair things will minister more and more to the needs and longings of his soul, and help him along some of life's darkest ways; he will learn with Keats, that

in spite of all
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring into us from the heaven's brink.³

¹ Masfield, *The Everlasting Mercy*.
³ From *Endymion*.

² T. E. Brown.

For those things to heal and bless, a man must keep his spiritual eyes and pores open; and the greatest danger of preoccupied, heavy middle-age is to allow these apertures to become closed up, to let the finer instincts and faculties gradually atrophy. It is a dead fate to become impenetrable; pray rather for anything, pain or pleasure, that will "stab your spirit broad awake."

A whimsical thinker has observed that mankind might be divided into three classes. There is the man who ignores or is blind to beauty and beautiful things, the one who observes them when they confront him, and the one who seeks after them: differences which reach deep down to questions of education and, deeper still, of character. Perhaps the appreciation, and therefore the preservation of the incomparable beauties of our English countryside will increasingly depend on the broad mass of public opinion supplied by class two, and even more on the energetic action of class three. There is no doubt to which of these categories Christians ought to belong.

There are very many points in life where religion and beauty meet. That whole realm of human aspiration and human experience which we call worship is one of them. For the man of any spiritual sensibility the sight or sound of beauty is calculated to evoke in him not admiration merely, but a sense of reverence, and for the true Christian a spontaneous act of worship. A similar instinct, working so to speak in the reverse direction, will impel the worshipping community to conduct its worship in an environment of beauty, and to express it in ways which are seemly and beautiful. Hence all the lovely cathedrals and churches, mediæval and modern; hence also the whole vast range of sacred music, and sacred poetry, and sacred art; indeed there is hardly anything that man can think or utter or do which cannot in some way be harnessed to the expression of the "beauty of holiness." Sometimes this attempted expression has been excessive or ill-considered; hence the

ugliness. And it is all too easy for the desired beauty in worship to encourage the production of the meretricious adornments invented by "ecclesiastical art furnishers"—ominous phrase! Members of the Church of England at any rate may feel thankful that their Churches are protected, as a rule effectively, by their Chancellors and Advisory Committees, against such gratuitous assaults.

Again, consider what is implied when one speaks of "the beauty of goodness." There is that about goodness, or at least about certain types of goodness, which can only be described by borrowing the language of beauty. A mother caring selflessly for her tiny babe, a friendship steadfast through bitter circumstance, a soldier giving his life for his comrades, a lover faithful unto death—these things are beautiful as well as good. Indeed is self-sacrificing love ever anything but beautiful? And has this world ever seen anything more morally exquisite than the life and death of Jesus Christ? Perhaps the worst fault of many of us Christians is that we have made goodness dull, righteousness unattractive—we ought to make it fascinating! Yet when, here and there, now and again, a human life catches something of the goodness of Christ Himself, that life shines with a beauty that the dullest can see and which even the unrighteous admire. "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us" (Ps. xc, 17), is a request which many respectable churchgoers might fitly include in their prayers.

Man has always a strong instinct to express his ideal of beauty, both in the life he lives and in the things he makes. The attempt to do the latter is what we call "art"; meaning by art not the mere inventing of adornment or decoration, but "the whole business of creative fashioning wherein hand and brain work together." The vision of beauty together with the attempt to express it is the impulse, and the significance of all art—painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature, the drama; it was in the mind of the builder of the Parthenon, and of the writer of the twenty-

third Psalm, and of the painter of the Sistine Madonna, just as it is in the mind of any man who tries to make a common pot as well as it can be made. And if this be art, and if the argument of this chapter is sound, that God cares not just for man's "soul" but also for the whole material setting of his life, then art is closely connected with the Kingdom of God, and it is a concern of Christianity that art should be good and not bad; moreover, it is, or ought to be, a concern of Christians not to allow the world of art to be handed over to modern pagans.

There is one aspect of this subject which may fitly be emphasized as this chapter closes. That is the place of beauty and art in every-day life and in the making of the things which man needs for common use. We have indeed, in this matter, made some advance on the days of our fathers and grandfathers. Many architects are building good houses, houses reminiscent of, without slavishly copying, satisfying Queen Anne and Georgian models. And industry in general is taking a great deal more pains about design. The admirable block lettering on the London Transport Board's stations and 'buses is a case in point; lettering which was the work of the late Edward Johnston who, as artists and others know, was a craftsman of real genius. It is not on the whole unduly optimistic to remark that the lettering to be observed on shops and public buildings as one walks down the street shows a considerable improvement on what was thought good enough a generation ago. But one has only to note the devastating ugliness of much of modern civilization, the bad houses and the still worse things they contain, to realize how much land there is still to be possessed. When shall we learn that "art"—in the word's true sense—is not an extra, an expensive luxury of the few, but a necessity for all, "a quality and a virtue which ought to be in everything that is made by human beings"? All men have a deep craving for beauty in life and environment, though many of them hardly realize

their need, and still less have they any idea how to satisfy it. As William Morris always pointed out, this lack of beauty is really a spiritual problem, and is bound up with the grave moral defects of the whole structure of our society. As we have already seen,¹ one place where the problem presses hard is in the kind of work that is done by a majority of the population. It is evident, as Clutton Brock says somewhere, that "work without beauty means unsatisfied spiritual desire in the worker"; but it is also sadly evident, as was noted before, that to revolutionize the conceptions, character and conditions of labour, and especially manual labour, as they obtain to-day, is going to be a very big task indeed.

Meanwhile, without any large change of conditions of life and work, there is much that we all can do, and, as Christians, *ought* to do. We might well make a beginning upon our own room or home, and try to carry out William Morris's famous injunction: "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful." What a bonfire would result! Some of the bad stuff, unfortunately, would have to be spared, for the time at least, owing to the horrible and inevitable connection of short purse and shoddy furniture—deal wardrobes painted to look like oak, chests of drawers with drawers that won't shut, rickety tables that always stand unevenly, chairs that are equally bad to look at or to sit on. But there is much else, especially in the "drawing-room" or "parlour," that might go at once—cheap and bad colour-prints, stuffy curtains and frowsy table-cloths, vulgar picture postcards, tawdry mirrors, pain-giving wall-papers, meaningless little mats with hideous vases standing on them, and all the clutter of futile and ugly bric-à-brac that crowds every inch of space on mantelpiece and shelves and small tables. Why don't we, in the name of beauty, arise in our wrath and cast these things away? For they make for a lie; they suggest

¹ Chapter VI, "Christianity and Work."

that beauty attaches chiefly to useless things, or is something you may artificially *add* to useful things; they obscure the great truth that good craftsmanship *is* beauty—that there always is beauty in the cunning shaping, the exactly right lines and proportions, of anything, whether a table, or a teapot, or a cabinet, or a knife, or a bridge, or a motor-car, which is perfectly adapted to the use for which it is intended.¹ If, when he has to buy furniture or other things, a man considers himself inartistic, or questions whether he has the requisite “taste,” then let him apply to what he sees the twin test of simplicity and fitness for use, and he will not go far wrong. But, while seeking escape from Victorian “prettiness,” let him not fall over on the other side into the dread vulgarity of the deliberate ugliness of ultra modern ornaments and decoration. And what we do severally in our houses, in the interests of beauty, that we must join together to do, or get done, in our towns and cities, and wage relentless war on mean houses, dirty streets, unworthy public buildings, ugly and ill-placed factories, disfiguring advertisements; ceasing to take for granted the grime and smoke and squalor and general hideousness, and not resting till we get the cleanness and light and space and air and beauty which are our rightful heritage. And that not only because beauty is for its own sake desirable. It is also desirable for its magic influence upon ourselves. Who shall say how much of human weariness and hopelessness, even of sin and crime, is due to the grey and hideous environment in which so many are imprisoned? “What,” asks the Bishop of Sheffield,² speaking of the desert stretches of our “East Ends,” “what is the influence of one picture gallery on the worker compared with that of his house, ugly as it is cheap, exactly like its neighbour and a hundred more in the same street, each street like a hundred others in the same town, and in a town like a hundred

¹ Cf. above, Chapter VI, § II.

² *The Artist and Religion*, p. 23.

towns in the same country—these hundred thousand homes from which God's skylight and earth's beauty are foreclosed—where all are using the same common crockery, and the same common furniture, gathering round the same shaped fireplace, mocked by the same patterned wall-paper? ” The vitality, even the moral health, of everyone is heightened by beautiful surroundings and lowered by ugly ones. Henry Drummond once said that “physical beauty makes moral beauty . . . a mere touch of it in a room, in a street, even in a door-knocker, is a spiritual force.”

If you get simple beauty and nought else,
You get about the best thing God invents;
That's somewhat, and you'll find the soul you've missed
Within yourself, when you return Him thanks.¹

This dream of a common life that shall shine with beauty is no mere artist's fantasy, no faddist's crank; *it is the will of God*, who bids us look for His Kingdom to be realized on earth after the pattern in heaven. Therefore the dream can, and will, come true. . . . In Him, and through Him, these longings shall find their final satisfaction. For the Kingdom of heaven is the very home and centre of all that man finds fair and exquisite and desirable, and

in the land of beauty
All things of beauty meet.

¹ Robert Browning, *Fra Lippo Lippi*

XII

Jesus said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . with all thy mind." ST. MARK xii, 30.

Brothers, don't be childish—except where evil is concerned, but in intelligence try to be your age.

1 COR. xiv, 20. Paraphrase by DR. J. W. C. WAND

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ grant you the spirit of wisdom . . . illuminating the eyes of your heart so that you can understand the hope to which He calls us.

EPHESIANS i, 17 (Moffatt's version).

We, the Church, like you (scientists), have our foothold in the real world, and are seekers after Truth. There is more than one path up the Hill of the Lord. It is only at the top that the paths meet, but we are engaged upon the same quest.

DR. INGE

The Lord hath more light and truth yet to break forth.
JOHN ROBINSON to the Pilgrim Fathers.

It is not the truth that a man possesses, or believes he possesses, but the honest pains he has taken to get at the truth, which makes a man's worth. For it is not by the possession of truth, but by the search after it, that his powers are extended, in which alone his ever-growing perfection consists. . . . If God held all truth in His right hand, and in His left hand simply the ever-active endeavour after truth—even with the condition that I should ever err—and said to me, "Choose!" I should humbly incline to His left, and say, "Father, give! for perfect truth is, surely, for Thee alone!" LESSING

There remains room for an agnosticism within religion.

DR. CARNEGIE SIMPSON

There is an idea abroad that spiritual fervour is incompatible with intellectual enlightenment. DR. INGE

CHAPTER XII

CHRISTIANITY AND THOUGHT

I

THE title of this chapter is in a certain sense descriptive of the whole book, inasmuch as the book represents an attempt to think out the application of Christianity to common life. But it is of set purpose that a separate chapter is devoted to the topic indicated, for the simple reason that, in practice, religion and thinking are not infrequently kept apart. Instincts, emotions, habits, friendships, circumstances—all these are frequent factors in determining the nature of a man's religion. But the factor of sheer, hard thinking is not commonly allowed the place which it ought to have. And, unless it is given that place, "every-day religion" is liable to be deflected from its sane and Christian course by the side-winds of folly, prejudice and delusion.

There are various causes at work to foster this severance between a man's spiritual life and his mental activities. For instance, there still survive religious people who, in religion, belittle and distrust intellectual processes; they imagine an antithesis between "faith" and reason, and think it a "holy" thing to exalt the former at the expense of the latter. They seem to forget that God made the mind, and that "faith" involves a movement of the whole personality, with will, feelings and intellect blending in one personal process. Then, again, there are people who engage in ordinary affairs with intelligence and even ability, but who never think of applying their mind to their religion as they do to their business. They would probably accept the name Christian, but it does not seem to occur to them to take the trouble to *understand* their religion in the sort of way

in which they seek to understand the running of a business, the working of a motor-car or the art of golf. Perhaps the real root of the trouble is the ordinary Britisher's intense dislike of thinking. We take most things, including religion, as a matter of course. We are not, as a nation, devoid of practical capacity, and we have a great knack of finding practical solutions for pressing problems; but the idea of probing through the familiar into the immensities behind is one that fills most of us, especially in religious things, with distaste and dismay.

Yet the most simple-minded Christian will find it well to do some thinking in his religion. He will never, otherwise, see half its glories or appreciate the secrets of its strength. He will remain blind to the great fact that Christianity is ultimately *rational*. Not rational in the lower sense of being capable of material proof; but rational in the far greater sense of revealing a profound harmony with man's deepest thinking and highest aspirations. Christians have good ground for claiming that the religion of Jesus Christ "makes sense" of God and the universe in a way that rationalism and other non-Christian schemes of thought completely fail to do. Indeed one of the most significant signs of our times is the apparently complete discrediting of rationalism. It still provides tags for Hyde Park orators, but it carries less and less conviction with those, students and others, who have opportunity to think and read. It deserves the gibe of a prominent thinker that "it is hardly scientific to lecture on the corpse of religion, when all the while religion is alive and laughing at you."

The fact is that the intellectual climate has changed considerably in recent years. It is true that the old dogmas of secularism crop up again here and there, especially perhaps among modern university students ignorant of the "humanities"; such dogmas as a faith in automatic progress, now indeed seen to be rather pathetic, or belief in salvation by natural science. But the intellectual opposi-

tion to Christianity is a good deal less sure of itself than it was a generation ago. "The camp-followers of unbelief may be gaining in assurance, but the leaders are beginning to look wistful. It was much easier to define a tenable alternative to Christianity in the later nineteenth century than it is to-day. Unbelief could then put up such a case as it had seldom been able to do before and as it is certainly not able to do now."¹

Moreover, there has been a big change on the higher levels of philosophy and theology. A spiritual view of the universe, and a conception of the ultimate reality as personal, no longer have to fight hard for any foothold. As the Oxford Divinity Regius Professor has recently pointed out, in a useful survey of trends of thought in this century, "Theologians no longer feel it necessary to apologize for thinking and speaking of God as the sovereign personal creator, ruler, redeemer and judge of this time-space universe, as having given to His creation a relative freedom and independence so that He stands over against it in personal relations."²

At the same time, over against this change for the better in the intellectual climate, must be set the fact that the general assumptions of modern civilization are far removed from those of the Christian religion. What the ordinary man really lives by are his basic, often subconscious, presuppositions; and the Christian Church must needs realize that their presuppositions, in Western Europe and nowadays to a large extent in this land, are diametrically opposed to the affirmations and the demands of the Gospel of Christ.

II

Christian "belief" is not to be thought of for a moment

¹ *Invitation to Pilgrimage*, by John Baillie, D.D. This brilliant book deserves careful study.

² *Biblical Theology and the Sovereignty of God*, by Leonard Hodgson, D.D., p. 12.

as a comfortable settling down in a mental armchair. It is rather, a voyage of discovery, an adventure, a long and arduous quest. As Donald Hankey once said, "True religion is betting your life there is a God." And the object of this quest is reality: reality which shows itself as truth, as goodness, as beauty; reality which is, ultimately, God Himself. Does this mean that every Christian must be a theologian and a philosopher? Not at all. But it does mean that every Christian can, and should, cultivate a certain attitude of mind. He should realize, for instance, that an honest and even successful attempt to do right does not exhaust the meaning of Christianity; that truth and beauty, as well as goodness, have their source in God. He should see that he has a moral duty of testing what he is asked to believe; for "the mass of men hold a great many opinions to which they have no right, because they are not the result of any search for truth." "I sometimes wonder," once remarked a great Christian thinker, "whether anyone has a right to belief in the Incarnation who has not first found it incredible." The Christian should understand that the fact of Christ, and his own relationship to God in Christ, are not things that can be privately appropriated, neatly classified and defined, and carefully communicated to others who can learn to repeat his formulæ; he must see that these things touch, at a hundred points, the very mysteries of the universe, and are as untamed as the free winds of God that blow as they list over the face of the earth. And he can hardly fail to note that Jesus would never force belief, or allow men to mistake formulæ for faith; rather He left them free, nay He set them free, to pursue truth wherever it might lead. For these reasons, the Christian, however loyal to his creed, will never think that he can hold truth, least of all any monopoly of truth, in the hollow of his hand.

It must be confessed that sometimes the Christian Church gives the impression of preferring orthodoxy to

truth, or rather of assuming that they are identical. A devout, sincere and reasoned belief in the Incarnation, which for the Christian is "orthodoxy," does not necessarily include a comprehension of the total divine-human reality, other parts of which may be disclosed to other seekers in other ways. As Charles Kingsley once remarked, "God's orthodoxy is *truth*, my friend; if Darwin speaks the truth he is orthodox." Ecclesiastics who are prone to preach dogmatically and frequently, and not without complacency, on the text about "the faith once delivered to the saints," might do well to leave that text alone for a while and instead sit down and do some hard thinking on what is meant by "truth."

Indeed the thoughtful Christian will always be prepared, if and when necessary, for intellectual suspense, and will patiently await the slow dawning of the true answer to some of his deepest questions. And he will be careful never to shutter the windows of his mind, nor to lose a sense of wonder. Not for him that deadening, damning ignorance which thinks to contain the wide sea in its child's pail; not that, but awe, and reverence, and wondering thankfulness for the glories of God in earth and sky and human life, and the yet greater glories that no eye hath seen nor mind imagined.

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!

And this adventure after truth is no forlorn hope; it is no rudderless drifting over uncharted seas. It is a real search after something that may be found, a reaching up to find and seize a Hand already stretched out. Otherwise this life of ours were indeed a meaningless mockery:

... a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

The Christian life is always a wonderful blend of struggle and achievement. So the Christian search for truth is not all seeking and no finding, all travelling and no arriving. As soon as you embark on the great adventure you stumble upon this paradox, that as you grasp more of Christ Himself, all the horizons of your thinking lift and stretch. And there dawns upon you some glimmering of truth's many-sidedness. There would be less of paralysing division in the Church to-day if Christians could see that, for them, there are at the very least three facets to truth, three elements in the Church's spiritual experience. There is the mystical or "evangelical" element, with its emphasis on the soul's immediate experience of the living God. There is the institutional or "catholic," emphasizing both the continuity and the universal order of the Church's life and of the Christian tradition. And there is the intellectual or "liberal," with its fear of formulæ, its passion for truth, and its jealousy for freedom to test and prove and probe and investigate. These necessary differences of emphasis lead to suspicion and division only as and when the common Christian fails to think and suffers his own petty prejudices to blind his eyes to the greatness of God's truth.

III

In John Masfield's striking poem, *The Everlasting Mercy*, the disreputable and drunken poacher Saul Kane is transformed into a good man and true; and he is himself, as he thinks behind his plough, quite certain that Jesus Christ is responsible for the change in him.

Up the slow slope a team came bowing,
Old Callow at his autumn ploughing,
Old Callow, stooped above the hales,
Ploughing the stubble into wales;
His grave eyes looking straight ahead,
Shearing a long straight furrow red;
His plough-foot high to give it earth
To bring new food for men to birth.

O wet red swathe of earth laid bare,
O truth, O strength, O gleaming share,
O patient eyes that watch the goal,
O ploughman of the sinner's soul,
O Jesus, drive the coulter deep
To plough my living man from sleep.

I kneeled there in the muddy fallow,
I knew that Christ was there with Callow,
That Christ was standing there with me,
That Christ had taught me what to be,
That I should plough, and as I ploughed
My Saviour Christ would sing aloud,
And as I drove the clods apart
Christ would be ploughing in my heart,
Through rest-harrow and bitter roots,
Through all my bad life's rotten fruits.

A great many other people have had an experience similar to this, and entertain a like conviction as to its cause. That this kind of experience is *real*—that is, that “something happens” to a man’s springs of action and so to his moral conduct—is now generally admitted; it is recognized as coming within the sphere of facts and phenomena which it is the business of psychology to investigate. The description and interpretation of such experience, and the relation of it to Christian belief, is and must always be the chief preoccupation of Christian thinking; it is the main undertaking of historic and modern theology. And (so this chapter claims) every individual Christian must use the mind he has, to reflect upon and understand the nature of his Christian experience.

It would obviate much difficulty and misapprehension, both within and without the Church, if it was more clearly understood that “dogma”—that bugbear of the “plain man”—simply represents an attempt to describe and formulate spiritual experience. Man, as a rational being, has to make that attempt, he cannot do otherwise; as Plato first insisted, “the unexamined life is not livable for a human being.” Religious dogma is not an invention of the theologians, it is a necessity of human nature. Let me illustrate what I mean. Imagine a Christian disciple of the

Jewish race somewhere about the year A.D. 35, one who had been drawn to Jesus of Nazareth in the days of His flesh, and had since shared the experiences of the little Christian community in those first thrilling years. Perhaps, with urgent tasks to perform and dangers to face, there had not yet been much opportunity to reflect; but at last there comes a day when he sits down to try and think out what it all means; he feels the impulse to sift his impressions and sort his experiences, to clear his mind and shape conclusions. What does he find to be the main content of his religious experience? He has always believed in God, the creator and sustainer of the universe; since he met Jesus he has dared to think of God and treat God as "Father." With regard to Jesus Himself, as he recalls the characteristics of that amazing personality, as he passes in review that life and that unforgettable death, he can only sum it up by saying to himself, "God must be like that"; in Him, Jesus, God is surely showing what He Himself is. Moreover, since those days ended, Jesus has seemed more alive than ever, and the thought of Him has become inextricably interwoven with all thought of God Himself. But this is not all. Ever since Jesus ceased to be physically present with them, this first-century Christian has been conscious, as he and his friends laboured for the new Kingdom, of a new energy and buoyancy and driving power, new hopes and impulses, indeed a new character and new self; he attempts and does things now which formerly would have seemed outrageously impossible; it is almost as if Jesus, as if *God*, had put into him something of His own life and spirit. . . . And what is he to make of it all? Who and what is this God who seems to be above and in the world, and in Jesus, and in his own heart? Must there not be in God some wonderful, indefinable three-foldness of personality and of function? And his experiences and those of his friends—their emergence from the old, engulfing life of evil, the astounding change that had come upon them all,

the new life, the new brotherly fellowship, the new hopes for the whole world, the new sense of spiritual realities transcending time and space—can it be that all these things fit in together as coherent parts of a planned and ordered whole, expressing a law and a purpose that have their springs in eternity? For these great things the effort had to be made to find words, not indeed to contain them, but at least to characterize them; and so the Church embarks on its task of evolving language to fit its experience, and the standard words and categories emerge—Trinity, incarnation, atonement, Holy Ghost, sin, redemption, regeneration, Holy Catholic Church, communion of saints, resurrection, judgment, life everlasting. "Dogma," therefore, originally and properly, is no mere theorizing, or juggling with words, or devising of tests and barriers; it is a courageous and vital attempt to interpret and communicate tremendous experiences.

There are of course those who maintain that the whole of the Christian Faith is one vast, global delusion; that Jesus was deluded, that He was not what He said He was, that His pictures of God are imaginary, that He misled His disciples; in fact that what is called Christian civilization has been simply built upon a lie. Those who think thus are of course entitled to their opinion; though it is indeed incumbent upon them to show just how such a structure could have been built up and sustained on the basis of such a delusion. If, on the other hand, Christ was not deluded, then Christianity is *news about reality*; it reveals not merely what ought to be but what is. It shows God in action, its Gospel is of a God who, in Jesus, did something, on a cosmic scale, and continues to work in the world on that very pattern. Therefore those who in faith commit themselves and their lives to such a God, who put their trust in "something outside history," may expect to find in their lives and surroundings results commensurate with such dynamic contact with ultimate Reality.

IV

This chapter, I may point out, is not written for the theologian but for "the man in the pew," or the man who has not even reached a pew at all but stands outside, not unsympathetic, but wondering what it is all about. To assist him, if I may, in any attempt to relate dogma to "every-day religion," I would like to offer one or two comments on what has been said above of the Christian necessity to elucidate and transcribe spiritual experience. In the first place, there is always a certain dangerous tendency, in these matters, to put the cart before the horse. The man inside the Church slips into thinking that the all-important matter is to accept the dogma, however little of the reality behind the dogma is actually passing into his experience. And the man outside assails the doctrine as stupid or mediæval or impossible, without making any personal attempt to explore what lies beneath it. Christianity is primarily a life, not a system of belief, and life always precedes analysis; "anyone who is willing to do God's will," said Christ, "shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God" (St. John vii, 17). Those words of Christ warn and judge all those who, in religion, accept dogmas with a minimum of personal verification, who easily, cheaply, inertly profess beliefs while taking very little pains to act on them.

Then, again, there is always a tendency for transcribed experience gradually to harden into static, rigid, authoritarian formulæ which, in the end, only too easily repress the life they are designed to explain and stimulate. As we have seen, formulæ there must be, if men are to define and explain anything; but that is no reason why, in religion, they should so often become contrivances to avoid thinking, beds to rest on, shelters to hide in, platforms to shout from, battlements to guard, barriers to exclude. Of creeds

and the Churches something is said elsewhere.¹ Suffice it to say here that every man who wants reality in religion must pursue it through and behind the interpretations and descriptions, official or otherwise, in which it may be offered to him. No one in his senses will under-value the accumulated wisdom of the centuries; to disregard the evidence and explanations of preceding generations, some of them with special qualifications for the task, would be gratuitously foolish. Yet there is a real sense in which even the unlearned and untutored man must himself go back again to the very source—and the recovery by historical criticism of the real New Testament, and the historic Jesus has made such a return more feasible for us to-day than for any generation since the first. After all, explanations do not always explain, and good things easily have the bloom rubbed off when passed too carelessly from hand to hand. There is a passage in one of W. J. Locke's books which, with a *reductio ad absurdum*, mocks at the weakness of third-hand religion. One of the characters seeks to explain the odd phenomenon of a Frenchwoman who was very "religious" but not very Christian: "'Mon ami,' said Bigourdin, 'the Bible taught the Church the beautiful history of Jesus Christ. The Church told a Bishop. The Bishop told a priest. The priest told the wife of the sub-prefect. The wife of the sub-prefect told the wife of the mayor. The wife of the mayor told the elderly unmarried sister of the corn-chandler, and the unmarried sister of the corn-chandler told Clothilde. And that's all that Clothilde knows about Christianity.'"

I feel inclined to add the comment that some of our modern "intelligentsia" who reject Christianity might well take more pains to make sure that it is authentic New Testament Christianity they are rejecting, and not some caricature of it, or an ancient or modern substitute for it which any reasonable Christian would disown at once.

¹ See Chapter XIV.

Moreover there are some atheists and agnostics who will outdo any theologian in ignorant dogmatism.

It is worth any effort, any pain, any seeming loss, to disentangle the essential from the non-essential, to cut clean through the accretions of generations and find again Him who is *Himself* the Way, the Truth and the Life. The truth-seeker will gain on the exchange.

Let men see
Breathe from me
Zeal for truth, unafraid
Of the price to be paid;—
Words that once could make Him clear,
Forms that once could bring Him near,
Things I loved wrenched clean away,
Half a cherished creed to pay!
Fear not, He is Truth, and I,
If I saw Him through a lie,
Shall not lose Him when I find
I must leave the lie behind.¹

Nor need such a truth-seeker fear for truth. Truth is well able to defend itself, and is only embarrassed when its would-be defenders try to interpose with the violent weapons of authority.

V

It is clear enough that no amount of thinking will enable any one mind to grasp all truth in its many aspects and ramifications.. All that is argued here is that the "plain Christian" could and should do sufficient thinking to enable him to realize something of the greatness of truth, to relate those parts of truth which come, at any rate partially, within his own apprehension to those which lie beyond it, and to make some sense of his own spiritual experiences. It is about the last of these thinking functions that I want to say something as this chapter closes.

There is a saying of Thomas Traherne's, that "to think well is to serve God in the interior court." The saying

¹ Janet Begbie, *Morning Mist*.

would serve as a good motto for the Christian's prayer life. The quality and effectiveness of "every-day religion" depend entirely on the vision, the inspiration, the actual touch with God which lies behind it; and in that life with God the *mind* must play its proper part. Take the all-important question, for prayer, of the conception of God in the mind of him who is praying. Of necessity allowance must be made for a certain margin of error, where blind and sinful men seek to know the holy and infinite God. But it is for us to reduce that margin to the smallest possible dimensions by blending with our power of intuitive, spiritual apprehension all the powers of ordinary hard thinking we possess. If this is not done, then it is more than possible that prayer may be addressed to a God who simply is not there. An unintelligent faith opens the door to credulity and superstition. "Where God is not, there are ghosts." "Take heed," urges Professor Royce, "lest your object of worship be only your own little pet infinite, that is sublime to you mainly because it is yours." The "Christian" who addresses his prayer to a God thought of as despotic, or vengeful, or capricious, or weakly good-natured, or anything other than the God of Jesus Christ, misses the mark just as badly as the heathen with his incantations or the Buddhist with his prayer-wheel. The conception of God that lies beneath your praying is of crucial importance. You cannot pray effectively unless you are sure of God's character. But what God is and wills and plans, what He is doing and wants us to do, how through prayer we may co-operate with Him—these are things that demand all the thought of which our minds are capable, and thought that concentrates on the picture of God we see in Christ. This does not mean the whittling down of prayer into a mere intellectual process. Nor does it exclude or belittle those moments of insight, those flashes of inspiration, those mountain tops of open vision, which come from time to time to every soul that is in tune with

Him. These flights of the spirit will become more, not less possible, if behind them is the permanent background of a spiritual life that is mentally disciplined. This kind of hard thinking, says the writer of a very valuable book,¹ "is the outcome of a settled resolution to come to grips with the great spiritual facts, by pondering them patiently, and painstakingly steeping the mind in them, until it is as completely naturalized in their lofty atmosphere as it is in the air of the market-place. It may well humiliate us to reflect how nimbly, and with what instinctive precision, our minds move among the ordinary actualities of our life in the world, how sensitive they are to every change and how flexible in applying themselves to every new situation, and then to realize how awkward, blunt-edged, and unadaptable these same minds are when we try to apply them to spiritual reality. There is no shirking the fact that it takes a strict and continuous discipline before the mind becomes tempered to the things of God, sensitive to the tides of grace, and flexible in the hands of the Spirit."

¹ *Creative Prayer*, by E. Herman. Cf. p. 78.

XIII

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. REVELATION iii, 20.

Jesus said: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends. ST. JOHN xv, 15.

My soul, be thou silent unto God; for my expectation is from Him. PSALM lxii, 5 (R.V. marg.).

By all means use sometimes to be alone.

Salute thyself: see what thy soul doth wear.

Dare to look in thy chest; for 'tis thine own:

And tumble up and down what thou find'st there.

Who cannot rest till he good fellows finde,

He breaks up house, turns out of doors his minde.

GEORGE HERBERT

Lord Jesus, who would think that I am Thine?

Ah! who would think,

Who sees me ready to turn back or sink,

That Thou art mine?

I cannot hold Thee fast though Thou art mine:

Hold Thou me fast,

So earth shall know at last and heaven at last

That I am Thine.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

There is a secret place of rest

God's saints alone may know;

Thou shalt not find it east or west,

Though seeking to and fro.

A cell where Jesus is the door,

His Love the only key:

Who enter will go out no more,

But there with Jesus be.

FROM THE INNER LIFE

THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

EVERY reformer has a programme; and most of his energies are spent in the effort to induce people to attend to it and to give it a trial. And cynics find an easy target in the accumulated heap of programmes, good, bad, and indifferent, which, from time to time, have been pressed upon humanity but which humanity could not be induced to adopt. Jesus was—is—a reformer. He also has a programme. His programme fares better than other programmes; indeed, it is the only programme of the kind which appears likely to find general acceptance and ultimate realization. What is the reason for this? The reason is the measure of His difference from other reformers. Unlike them, He comes to men with both a programme and the key to its accomplishment. He not only tells men what to do; but, what is far more difficult, He tells them how to do it. His reform-programme is sweeping enough; but He does not omit the essential preliminary of individual regeneration. All through this book we have glanced, from time to time, at this aspect of His unique power with men. In the various regions of human life that have been examined we have always found ourselves thrust back on the conclusion that the values and standards which we see to be right and desirable are unattainable save by His methods. In this chapter I propose to examine more closely what this method, this secret, really is; for unless we can get fairly hold of it, the "every-day religion" of our ideal will slip away out of reach.

I

The method referred to depends, as we have seen before,

on a real personal contact between us human beings and God Himself. Man's moral duty, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is based on, and complementary to, something more fundamental still: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy strength." And if the sense of that moral duty is losing force to-day, it can only be because the Second Commandment is losing its connection with the First. The secret of this relationship with God is, in essence, simple; that is to say, it is not an esoteric mystery reserved for the initiated few, nor is it so intellectually complex as to be available only for the *intelligentsia* of mankind. Nevertheless it is missed by multitudes; and it constantly eludes the grasp of many who wish to be, and in a certain sense are, religious. Why is this? The fact surely is that most of us do not really *want* goodness or God; or at least our desire for Him is so half-hearted as to be ineffective. And, what is even more serious, even though we see that goodness is beautiful and desirable, that it would make the world a changed world, yet incontinently, perversely, not once nor twice but again and again, we let it go and choose its opposite. This hideous preference for evil, this ghastly wilful flaw in the mind of man, this poison, this "horrid impediment of the soul," begetting the misery, the disease, the hate, the chaos that pour like a flood over God's world—for this thing Jesus, and the men of God before Him and since, have a name: they call it *sin*. It is well to look at that word, not dismissing it as obsolete, or as part of the preacher's stock-in-trade. "Crime" has a legal savour, and we can leave it to juries and judges; we are concerned with something even deeper and more serious than injury to society. By calling it "sin" Jesus would have us face the judge and jury in our own hearts; He would bid us see what our blind selfishness (for that is sin's essence) means to God. Making all possible allowance for heredity, for environment, for every extraneous circumstance, we must perforce in honesty admit

that "sin" is our own fault; that our hands have built this prison-house in which we live. It is told of a famous smith of mediæval times, that having been taken prisoner and put in a dungeon, he conceived the idea of escaping, and began to examine the chain that bound him, in the hope of discovering some flaw which might make it easier to be broken. His hope was vain, for he found from marks upon it that it was one of his own workmanship, and it had always been his boast that none could ever break a chain which he had forged. And now it was his *own* chain that bound him: Are we not in a like case? And is there any way out from *this impasse*?

There is a way out. And at the entrance to that way there stands a cross, and on the cross hangs the Son of God Himself. . . . In speaking of this matter I do not propose to use the language of rhetoric (as if words could ever paint so great a thing), nor the language of theology—the pedantries of theologians and the arid controversies of little men only obscure the inexpressible beauty and the unmistakable significance of that Death on Calvary. Speaking as a plain Christian, for whom there would be no Christianity without that cross and its assurance of forgiveness, I would try and set down in ordinary language something of what it means. I am quite sure, to begin with, as Christians from the first have been sure, that in all this "*God was in Christ*"; that that death, due, as to immediate causation, to the enmity of the Jews and the judgment of Pontius Pilate, was at the same time serving the eternal purposes of God Himself; there and then was the classic instance of the shaping of good out of the raw material of evil. And if God was Himself "in" that happening (I do not attempt to *argue* this: I am simply expressing universal Christian conviction and experience), then certain inferences are legitimate, indeed inevitable. For one thing I see there some hint of what sin must mean to God. If "*God was in Christ*" on Calvary, then the wrong-doing that set up that

Cross, and all the wrong-doing of humanity before and since, are deep and terrible wounds in the heart of eternal Love. Yet the Cross is far more than a revelation of a passive, suffering God. The whole earthly life of Jesus, culminating in the climax of self-giving, reveals God in action, God *taking the initiative* to bring men back into fellowship with Himself. "He first loved us" . . . "God proves His love for us by this, that Christ died for us while we were still sinners." There, demonstrated on this earth, set forth in a human life on the plane of history so that all can see and understand, is Divine Love, reaching down to estranged humanity to bless and heal and forgive and restore. There is the amazing thing of God saying to men, in effect, that He *wants* them; that He on His side can never rest content while His fellowship with them is broken; that He is prepared to go all conceivable lengths to repair that broken fellowship.

Is not this the answer to our fundamental difficulty described above? Once a man sees that his sin has hurt God and that, nevertheless, God still wants him, then the whole situation is changed. And it is precisely this tremendous change which is effected when a man comes up against the Cross of Christ with his eyes open. As the meaning of that death dawns on my dull mind, then there is quickened in me a new distaste for sin, a new desire for goodness, a new longing to respond to that seeking Love and seize that stretched-out Hand. Incredible as it may seem, He still, despite all the past, believes in me, sees possibilities in me, and will lift me up to try again.

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked anything.
"A Guest," I answered, "worthy to be here."
Love said: "You shall be he."
"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on Thee."

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,

"Who made the eyes, but I?"

"Truth, Lord, but I have marred them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve."

"And know you not," saith Love, "who bore the blame?"

"My dear, then I will serve."

"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste My meat."
So I did sit and eat.¹

II

If we had not heard all this before we should say it was too good to be true. But any man who refuses to let himself be deterred, either by familiarity or by incredulity, and is willing to stoop low enough to enter this portal, does in fact find himself walking in the way of power. Power to be his true self, power to rise to the highest possibilities of his better nature, power to live by the standard of Christ in the common circumstances of daily life—that is, beyond any gainsaying, given to those who, rescued, healed, restored, forgiven, abide continually in the friendship of the living God. No Christian who is worthy of the name will ever cut down his ideal to the measure of his power: he will increase his power to match his ideal. It is not easy, in a page or two, to describe this hidden dynamic which can and does make a selfish man unselfish. The man really comes to live in a new moral climate. As Dr. Glover describes it, "Jesus changes the spiritual temperature and the parasite sin dies, and the natural man revives and grows into what God meant. . . . It is the beautiful instincts, the powers of mind and character that make, we feel, the true man. What Jesus does is to give them the chance to grow."² And this "climate" is as favourable to faith as it is fatal to sin. Faith, in Jesus's meaning of the word, is no religious technicality; it stands rather for an unshakable conviction that God is real, near, available, and

¹ George Herbert.

² *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, p. 30.

an unhesitating readiness to stake all on that conviction. Those men who, in the first century and since, have learnt their faith from Jesus, have found in their own experience that God in Christ *is* the dominating factor in every situation, that there does actually seem to flow into their personality from Him something of His very self, something which transforms character and fashions circumstances with a decisiveness and a completeness that have no parallel elsewhere. All the early Christian documents are full of this experience, and strain their available language in the effort to describe it.¹

The new psychology has done much of late to reveal and elicit the latent possibilities of average human nature. For nineteen centuries Christianity has been effecting just such moral transformations, though without psychological definitions and explanations. When a Christian hears the living Christ say to him "You can," he says to himself "I can"; and in the strength of that confidence the words "possible" and "impossible" alter their meanings. "In Him who strengthens me I am able for anything" (Phil. iv, 13 [Moffatt]); "It is no weak Christ we have to do with, but a Christ of power" (2 Cor. xiii, 3). This exuberance of spiritual life, this clean break with old sins, this flow of moral power, is, however amazing it may seem, God's free gift to the ordinary man; to regard it as an attainment of the religiously elect is to misunderstand it altogether. It is for all; and it is an experience so great that it can only be described as a passing from death to life—"there is a new creation whenever a man becomes united to Christ" (2 Cor. v, 17). St. Paul, quite truly but paradoxically, "has to keep telling his converts to remember that they are dead and buried, and reminds them how indecent it is for a man to forget his own funeral once it has taken place. If a Christian meets his old self emerging in some evil thought—he

¹ See such passages as St. John v, 24, Acts xx, 32, Rom. viii, 2 Cor. v, 17f.

ought to say to it, 'What are you doing here? When Christ found me we buried you.' . . . The choice for everyone who finds Christ and is found by Him is not a choice between different grades of respectability, but between living in the world of 'self' and living in the Kingdom of Grace."¹

This experience of forgiveness, of vitalizing, energizing power, while it varies in intensity, and for different people takes different forms, produces in all the same solid result, namely, that of a character which grows to resemble the character of Christ. The building of such a character, with stones from such a quarry, is not selfishness disguised as religion; it is, as we have seen before,² the chief service we may render to our fellows, the most effective contribution we may make to the needs of our generation. These astounding gifts of His, poured out with transforming effect, are not for a man's private edification; any such receiving of God's love must kindle a response to His purposes. "God is not a spiritual troubadour, wooing the hearts of men and women to no purpose; God goes through the world like drums and fifes and flags, calling for recruits along the street."³ When God is the dominating factor in a man's relationships with other men, then, through a myriad different channels, the Divine in him will spontaneously, quietly, inevitably touch and help and influence them. The whole process is gloriously natural and normal. It is worlds removed from priggishness, or a blatant and repellent religiosity. There is nothing forced or mechanical or artificial about the life with Christ, and the service of men for Christ's sake. Character by contagion is a law no less infallible than that of gravitation. So the first disciples found, when they kept company with Him among the hills of Galilee, experiencing, in that companionship, what

¹ W. R. Maltby on "The Power of God in Human Life," in *Christ and Human Need*.

² Cf. Chapter IV.

³ H. G. Wells.

Harnack has called "infinite love in ordinary intercourse." And so it invariably happens. When a man deliberately makes room in heart and life for the living Jesus Christ, then, as night follows day, sorrow loses its sting, sin is cheated of its power, defeat is swallowed up in victory, and the whole of life—its work, its beauty, its purpose, its friendships—takes on a radiance which transfigures everything. "Thereafter one goes about the world like one who was lonely and has found a lover, like one who was perplexed and has found a solution." If we spend time in the company of Christ, we simply cannot help becoming better men and women; and if we are better men and women, that fact will inevitably operate for good in the lives of those with whom we come into daily contact. Many years ago in the South Pacific there was a missionary bishop named John Selwyn, who in his university days had proved himself the possessor of great physical strength. He had rowed in the Cambridge boat. In the course of his work as Bishop of Melanesia he had one day to speak grave words of warning and rebuke to a man who was being prepared for baptism. The man, removed from savagery only by a generation or two, lost his temper and struck the bishop a violent blow in the face with his clenched fist. All the bishop did in return was to fold his arms and look at the man, who fled from his presence into the jungle, terrified and ashamed. It was in the bishop's power to strike him down, but instead he calmly waited to receive another blow. Years afterwards, when the bishop had left Melanesia crippled with illness, and was now Master of a College at Cambridge, the man who had assaulted him came to a missionary and begged to be baptized. He was examined, and his penitence was proved to be genuine. He had not long to live, and his baptism could not be delayed. Asked what name he would like to take, he replied: "Call me John Selwyn, for it was he who taught me what Jesus Christ is like."

III

From all this there is an obvious inference. It is, that for anyone who wants to make the best of his life it is infinitely worth while—nay, indeed absolutely essential—to spend some time every day in God's company. It is, indeed, "a great art to commune with God"; but the art may be learnt—*must* be learnt, if we are to make a success of "every-day religion." The mode, and place, and hour of entering His Presence may vary indefinitely; He is to be found whenever and wherever men seek Him—in the sacred mysteries of the Holy Communion, in the closed room, in the peaceful garden, in the fields or the woods or on the hillside. The essential conditions of uninterrupted intercourse are time and quiet. "Hurry is the death of prayer." "The spiritual realities do not shriek and shout, and it still remains true that Jesus comes, 'the doors being shut.' " No rules can be laid down, but probably for most people these conditions of time and quiet are best secured in the early morning. Many of the finest Christians have learned that they could not manage without the "morning watch," and thought it worth while to make any sacrifice to get it. Charles Simeon, one of the leaders of the Evangelical revival, from 1782 to 1836 Vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge, found it hard to get up in the morning to say his prayers. He had rooms in King's College, of which College he was a Fellow; and he determined one day that if he failed to rise at the hour he set himself, he would give half a crown to his bedmaker. Next morning, in bed, found him arguing with himself that his bedmaker needed the half-crown much more than he did, and so his prayer appointment was missed. Thereupon he resolved that on the next failure, instead of giving half a crown to his bedmaker, he would throw a guinea into the Cam, flowing by a hundred yards from his rooms. He did miss again; and promptly

walked down to the bridge and threw the coin into the river, where no doubt it remains to this day.¹ I am tempted to add another story of another Cambridge man, Douglas Thornton, of Marlborough and Trinity, who subsequently gave his life to the Cause in Egypt. I remember as a boy being taken to Douglas Thornton's rooms in Trinity by my brother,² who was Thornton's contemporary. Both belonged to a group of keen Christian men, all of them observers of the "morning watch." Thornton, with characteristic enthusiasm, made himself get up every morning at some incredibly early hour. He found the mere noise of an alarum clock quite insufficient to get him out of bed, so, being of a mechanical turn of mind, he devised a most ingenious contrivance of upright posts at the end of his bed, with cords and pulleys attached to the bedclothes and connected with the alarum clock; the effect of which was, at the appointed hour, to lift the bedclothes clean off him as he lay in bed! He knew, as other wise men know, that it is worth while employing any dodge, however homely, which will help you to say your prayers. *There is no other way* in which to become and to continue spiritually fit. "Would to God," once cried Samuel Rutherford, "that all cold-blooded, faint-hearted soldiers of Christ would look again to Jesus and to His Love; and when they look, I would have them to look again, and again, and fill themselves with beholding Christ's beauty."

Give Him thy first thoughts;
So shalt thou keep
Him company all day.
And in Him sleep.

Those who thus seek and find God know that the relationship may be described, without irreverence or presumption, as one of intimacy; an intimacy that loves to look up at Him or speak with Him at odd moments and in all sorts of

¹ The story is told in Bishop Moule's *Life of Charles Simeon*.

² Theodore, afterwards Bishop of Winchester.

places—in the street, the train, the 'bus, the office, in busy times, or among throngs of people. Surely the God of Jesus Christ—who runs to meet the prodigal, who loves children, who cares for flowers, who is *interested* in men—must mean our relationship with Him to be of this kind? “Behold, no longer do I call you servants, I have called you friends.” How extraordinary that much of “official” Christianity should have completely missed this thing in God! “Many of the religious people I know,” says “Parson John” in a letter to “Miriam Grey” in a little pamphlet that is worth its weight in gold,¹ “when they talk of religion, have a bedside manner, and walk about in felt slippers. And if they speak of God, they always tidy themselves first. But you go in and out in all the rooms in God’s house as though you were quite at home. You open the doors without knocking, and you hum on the stairs, and it isn’t always hymns either. My aunt thinks you are not quite reverent; but, then, she can keep felt slippers on her mind without any trouble. . . .” And here is a bit from “Miriam Grey’s” reply: “Until about three years ago I used to think the right thing was to tidy up, and be grave and prepared in my mind . . . but now it’s so different. What is the difference, you say? Well, I’m not quite sure, but it’s something like this. All that time the world was really a school. And though I called God *Father*, I really thought of Him as a lot of other things first—Schoolmaster, King, Lord Almighty, and so on; and afterwards, or with an effort, I remembered He was Father, though even then He was sometimes a long way off. It had never really got down into my mind that He was *my* Father. And now it is different. I’m not at school; I’ve come home. It is my Father’s house, and it’s awfully jolly to live at home with Him there *always*. So why shouldn’t I go in and out freely? Your daughter said one day that Dad’s study had *never* been shut against her. How shouldn’t I or you go

¹ *God in Everything* (Kelly, “Manuals of Fellowship,” No. 3).

into *His* rooms without knocking? He leaves the doors open on purpose, because He's glad to have us. I'm sorry if your aunt's feelings are shocked; but the fact is that God is the only one who *never* makes me feel shy, or afraid of being in the way, or not good enough or wise enough or something enough, and I do love it so."

One matter may be emphasized at this point. In this wonderful, happy companionship, especially in the times set apart for "praying," spaces should always be kept for *silent* converse. True prayer is not a monologue but a conversation; and it is vital that ample opportunity should be given to Him to speak to us. It is well to take pains to cultivate the listening side of prayer. "The more earnestly you are at work for Jesus," a wise man once said, "the more you need times when what you are trying to do for Him passes totally out of your mind, and the only thing worth thinking of is what He is doing for you."

It goes, or should go, without saying that this serene companionship is invulnerable to the assault of circumstance. As countless men and women have found, ~~in every~~ *in every* sort of predicament and peril, God is there, by their side; neither life nor death nor any created thing whatsoever can separate them from the love of Christ. The degree of consciousness of the Lord's presence may indeed vary; pain or illness or passing nervous depression may cloud the sense of His loving care; yet, before and after the darkness, and even subconsciously in the midst of it, there is always the deep-down knowledge that His hand is not withdrawn.

It fortifies my soul to know
That tho' I perish, Truth is so;
That howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change;
I steadier step when I recall
That if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

And, *a fortiori*, that life with God, so far from being ended by death, will be to an inconceivable degree enhanced and enlarged. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither

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And, *a fortiori*, that life with God, so far from being ended by death, will be to an inconceivable degree enhanced and enlarged. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither

have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him " (1 Cor. ii, 9).

I know not where His islands lift
 Their fronded palms in air,
 I only know I cannot drift
 Beyond His love and care.

For everyone, whatever his duties or vocation, it remains true that life's best work is accomplished in "the secret place"; there is the source and secret of the highest kind of output. The Venerable Bede in his History tells the story of a chieftain who, as he faced the battle-line of his enemies, saw a company of monks lifting up their hands in prayer for them on a hill a little way off. Directing his soldiers towards the monks, he gave the order, "Kill those men first, for they are the most dangerous." In wielding that mighty weapon some are more adept than others; but every common Christian can and should know something of its use. Our several gifts and talents, our tasks and vocations, may vary indefinitely, but this one thing all can do: we can bring to God a personality to be filled with Himself, to be touched, energized, set alight by the flame of His Spirit. Gallons of cold water will be poured on those spiritual fires to put them out, but they shall burn steadily on if they are duly fed, like the flames that Christian was shown in *Pilgrim's Progress*, from the secret fount of oil on the farther side. To keep that flame alive, in the campaign for the Kingdom of God, through every circumstance of discouragement, despite all opposition within and without—that is the plain duty, and the perfectly possible duty, of every servant of Christ. And to fight by His side, inspired by His strength and courage, is the most satisfying thing a man can ever do.

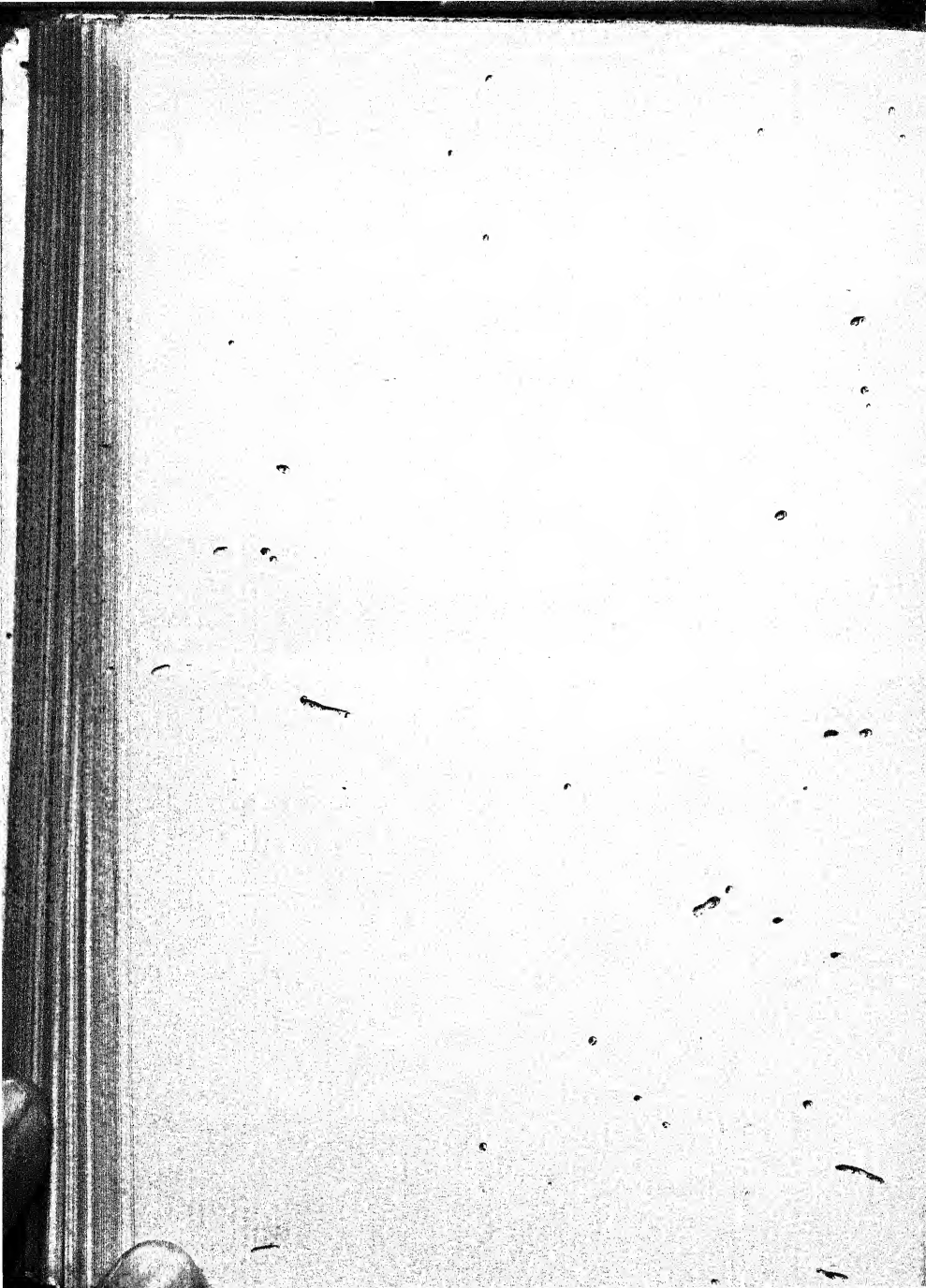
Joy is the wine that God is ever pouring
 Into the hearts of those who strive with Him,
 Light'ning their eyes to vision and adoring,
 Strength'ning their arms to warfare glad and grim.

So would I live, and not in idle resting,
Stupid as swine that wallow in the mire,
Fain would I fight, and be for ever breasting
Danger and death, for ever under fire.

Bread of Thy Body give me for my fighting,
Give me to drink Thy Sacred Blood for wine,
While there are wrongs that need me for the righting,
While there is warfare splendid and divine.

Give me, for light, the sunshine of Thy sorrow,
Give me, for shelter, shadow of Thy Cross,
Give me to share the Glory of Thy morrow,
Gone from my heart the bitterness of loss.¹

¹ G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, *Rough Rhymes*.



XIV

Striving together for the faith of the gospel.

PHILIPPIANS i, 27.

Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her . . . in order to have the Church as His very own, standing before Him in all her glory, with never a spot or wrinkle or any such flaw, but consecrated and unblemished.

EPHESIANS v, 25-27 (Moffatt's version).

The Christian life means a considered and settled togetherness of men with men through their togetherness with God.

T. E. JESSOP

Adaptability to new environment is the law of life, and any institution that tries to remain stationary in a moving world is doomed. J. R. COHU

It is the glory of Christianity that we never know what we shall discover in it next. SYDNEY CAVE

The only question which we have to ask when the vision of a great enterprise rises before us is, Is it the Will of God? What is required of us is that we should yield ourselves gladly to be borne forward by the Divine current which moves about us.

BISHOP WESTCOTT

"Thy Will be done" has been a wail, instead of a shout of joyful expectation.

CHRISTUS FUTURUS (quoted in *Prayers for the City of God*)

Trumpeter, sound for the Great Crusade,
Sound for the fire of the Red Cross Kings;
Sound for the passion, the splendour, the pity,
That swept the world for our Master's sake.
Sound till the answering trumpet rings
Clear from the heights of the Holy City:
Sound for the Tomb that our lives have betrayed
O'er ruined shrine and abandoned wall;
Trumpeter, sound the great recall:
Trumpeter, rally us, rally us,
Sound for the last Crusade!

ALFRED NOYES

CHAPTER XIV

DOING IT TOGETHER

I

THIS book has tried to draw a picture of what happens when a man seeks to bring the spirit of Christ into his every-day affairs. Before the book ends it needs to be said with some plainness that there can be no question of any complete and satisfactory application of Christianity to common life until we all set to know and apply it *together*. A single battalion going "over the top" and rushing ahead, with its flanks in the air, may inspire by its example, but it achieves no large or permanent gain of new ground; its adventure is magnificent, but it is not war. If in our generation, or in any generation, substantial victories are to be won for the Kingdom of God, they will have to be achieved by an advance all along the line, with unity of plan, careful co-ordination and co-operation between the available forces, and a spirit of mutual trust and strong comradeship animating the rank and file of all the armies. It is indeed true, as this book has tried to show, that there must always be something *first-hand* about all personal religion; despite our mutual interdependence, no person can conceivably maintain or regulate his neighbour's relations with God. Moreover, every Christian is summoned to make his own adventures in Christian living, whatever his fellow-Christians may be doing. But true religion, however personal and adventurous, is never a private thing, to be privately used and enjoyed like a house or a garden, or a motor-car; still less is it a complex scheme whereby the fortunate few, who manage to learn the rules, make sure of spiritual safety while the many fend for themselves as best they can.

There is perhaps a sense in which you can belong to a Church without being truly a Christian; but you cannot be fully a Christian without belonging to a Church. The Christian religion is a community affair, and it means membership in the Church of Christ. Indeed what keeps Christianity alive in the world at all is the Church—the worshipping community of Christ's people. Moreover, when knit in vital comradeship, men seek God *together*. He gives Himself to them in a way in which no isolated soul can apprehend Him; and the rich potentialities of His Kingdom on earth will only be explored when men in groups and communities apply its whole programme to their common life.

That His followers should be thus linked to one another in a living tether was an essential part of Christ's plan. There was no question of their forming a society to unite in propagating His ideals; in virtue of their common life derived from Him they found themselves to be one body, members one of another, a spiritual family with loyalties and obligations more stringent than those of ~~any~~ blood relationships or other earthly associations. The significance of this discovery was quickly and clearly recognized by the "Church," as it soon came to be called, of primitive times; indeed it was one of the greatest things in the experience of the early Christian community. It was necessary to coin a new name for this new thing, and they called it "the fellowship":¹ it was "a community of spirit issuing in community of life." And in the strength of this divine fellowship, with a sublime certainty that the invisible Christ was literally leading them, and with absolute confidence in one another, they made an impression on, and wrought a change in, the world of their day, in a fashion which has hardly been paralleled since.

¹ Cf. Acts ii, 42 (note the significance of the definite article).

II

It is proverbial that each generation in turn likes to picture itself as standing on the very watershed of history. But, after these two global wars, and standing on the threshold of the atomic era, we of the present generation have some ground for thinking that we have reached a real crisis in the affairs of men. And those of us who believe in Jesus Christ are, we contend, justified in our view that Christianity is the only hope of the future, and that organized religion is confronted to-day by an opportunity to "apply Christianity," which is one of the greatest in all history and which may not recur. But all depends, humanly speaking, on Christians and the Christian Churches "doing it together." . . . As to the greatness of the opportunity, when one contemplates the state of the world of to-day, floundering in hopeless political and economic confusion, a prey to sinister and disintegrating forces, he may well exclaim that now is the moment for Christianity: if it has anything creative to say, to say it, and if it has any salvation to produce, to produce it. Again, there are many evidences that, behind and beneath contemporary materialism (flourishing in practice while discredited as a philosophy), there exists an unsatisfied spiritual hunger in all sorts of people and among very different sections of the community. Many appear to be groping after something that may make life more satisfying and put them in contact with its hidden realities. The shattering experiences of these two wars, and of the desperate state into which Europe fell between them, have meant, for many men and women, nothing less than a moral and mental earthquake. There is a sense of something being wrong at the very heart of things; there is a hunger to find some "way out"—some new start which will lift us out of ourselves into new fellowship and justice.

"The sense of failure which haunts this generation cries aloud for the knowledge of some power by which we can rise above our limitations and escape the predestined wheel of our own past." I am not one of those who believe that our generation is more irreligious than its predecessors; indeed there is considerable evidence that it is less so. For example, both wars, besides driving a great ploughshare through men's mental subsoil, opened up entirely unsuspected reservoirs of moral capacity. The nation as a whole, and millions of its individual members, have shown themselves capable of a very wonderful standard of selfless service and sacrifice. The daily, hourly self-giving of men on the beaches, in the air, on the seas, and of civilians in all the bombing, was something which will never be forgotten. Yet I dare say that not ten per cent of these men and women realized that in that experience they were touching something that lies at the heart of Christianity. However little, as yet, they may have been impressed by organized religion, none can say that the people of these islands are incapable of answering a call when they hear it, of responding to an ideal when they see it. Who will ever forget the exaltation of the grim years 1940 and 1941 when this nation, conscious of its destiny, and responding gloriously to the greatest call in its history, stood quite alone and unafraid against the implacable foe. If and when, at last, our people are able, through whatsoever means, to catch the authentic notes of Christ's own voice, to see in Him the fulfiller of their desires, the one hope of a new and better world, there may well take place something like a landslide towards the Kingdom of God.

And yet, this giving of Christ to the world, this application of His inexhaustible resources to the infinite variety of human need—it is just this task which official Christianity seems unable to perform with any adequacy. *What is wrong?* Thank God for the growing numbers in the Churches who are determined to find the answer to this

query. For it is clear that there is something wrong. I would not indeed for a moment minimize the magnificent work which the Church has done and is doing. What the nation has of religious sense and moral standard may well be due, in large measure, to long centuries of quiet, patient work by the Church's pastors and to the continuous leavening influence of many of her devoted members. But when that has been said, it still remains broadly true that many men and women of our day are fumbling after Christ, with a dim hope that He will cure their ills and right their wrongs, and yet somehow or other they fail to find Him in the Churches. They feel, and not, it must be confessed, without some reason, that there is some indefinable discrepancy between that fresh and vital thing which Jesus brought men at the first and the modern, official institution which functions under the Christian name, between the Christ of Galilee and the creeds which tame and tabulate all He stood for, between His first adventurous followers and their mild successors of to-day, whose chief religious activity seems to be to sit in pews on Sundays. The rigid traditions from an obscure and ancient past, the crystallized conventions of ecclesiastical thought and language, the prayers and liturgies irrelevant to modern life, the flood of talk and the tiny trickle of deeds, the oddities, the inconsistencies, the aloofness of Church officials and often of Church members—all these things conspire to create in the mind of the onlooker, even of the sympathetic onlooker, the idea that what is mostly wrong with the Church is a grave *want of reality*. As H. R. L. Sheppard once said, in a characteristic utterance, many of these onlookers "find our brave assertions and poor achievements irreconcilable. . . . We appear to them like Alpine climbers who, after boasting of the height they are about to scale, take their ice-axe, rope and other equipment, and are discovered later proceeding cautiously up Ludgate Hill."

III

It is, of course, easy to abuse the Church; organized religion ever offers a target which the poorest shot can hardly miss. And we who "belong," we who love our Mother Church and have drawn from her our sustenance, we are probably more keenly and humbly aware of her shortcomings than the critics who assail her from outside. Nor can we ever forget, as the critics sometimes forget, what, under God, the Church has achieved in history and what it is even now achieving in the world of our day. Reference has already been made in these pages to the Church's brave stand in enemy-occupied Europe, to its recent splendid acts of witness in the Far East, to its continued expansion in the teeth of difficulties, and to the remarkable vitality of newly-founded younger Churches.

Any criticism, therefore, especially criticism from within, should be of a positive and constructive character. Granted that the Church has failed to keep touch with a good deal of contemporary life, and has lost some of the weight of moral authority and the keenness of spiritual challenge which have been, and still should be, hers, *where lies the way of recovery?* I have named this chapter "Doing It Together." What precisely is it that we, as a fellowship of Christians, are called upon to "do together"? What are the characteristic functions which, *as a Church*, we are summoned to perform, and perform effectively?

To these questions there is, so many of us are convinced, a perfectly plain, though possibly unpalatable, answer. The first thing, and the main thing, is to get our values right. The "ecclesiastical values," which so easily monopolize the field, must be ousted from their pride of place, and the "Gospel values" reinstated in their stead. We need a far truer sense of proportion as between the claims of the Church as maintaining (of necessity) its ecclesiastical

organization and the Church as giving its Life to further the ends of the Kingdom of God. The change will be drastic, and will not be effected without effort and pain. Axe in hand we have to hew our way through the entangling thicket of minor preoccupations till once more we see, and are free to respond to, the great eternal verities of the Gospel of Christ. "We must recover the unedited truth as it flames forth on the world in Christ Jesus." This fatal inability to distinguish between the essential and the unessential is just one of those things which produce the sense of unreality already referred to, and which tend to fill with despair many both inside and outside the Church. A *Times* article, written some years ago but still unhappily relevant, is symptomatic of a great mass of puzzled lay opinion and speaks both for those outside the Church and for many on its fringe who have a real desire for closer fellowship with it. It complained that "their position is not made any easier when they observe that so much emphasis is placed on questions of secondary importance by those who are regarded as the most representative exponents of the Church's doctrine and practice. They desire instruction on the vital, dynamic facts of the Gospel, and too often they look for it in vain."¹

Let me illustrate what I mean in urging that our first care must be to get our "values" right. Take such large and (for Churchmen) important matters as creeds and credal tests of orthodoxy, the meaning of sacraments, terms of Reunion, relations of Church and State, liturgical revision, origins and functions of Episcopacy, revision of the Canon, clergy discipline, administration of the Ecclesiastical Commission, alterations in our systems of finance and of patronage, further powers for Parochial Church Councils, and so on. All of us who are Church people, and especially Anglicans, are aware that these matters are of urgent importance, and supremely affect the fitness of the Church to do

¹ October 19, 1922.

its work; for instance, the truly desperate poverty of the clergy is often hampering, and sometimes paralyzing in its effects. These things must be dealt with; and after all the Church need not be ashamed of the prodigious and not unsuccessful efforts it has made during the last twenty years, especially since the passing of the Enabling Act, to put its own house in order. But it is vital to realize that all such doctrinal discussion and liturgical change and administrative reform are only *means to an end*, that the Church itself is only a means to an end, and that if the bulk of Church people allow their thought and time and energies to be swamped by the "means," the "End" will retreat farther and farther into the dim distance? It is as if an engine-driver should spend all his time making his engine fit to go, and so allow it to fail to do the very thing for which it was built, namely, to haul a heavy train to its appointed destination. This perpetual preoccupation with the machinery itself, this turning inwards of religious aspirations and religious devotion, this obliviousness of the soul-hungry world outside the door—this is the essence of the self-centred institutionalism which gnaws the vitality of organized religion. The Church, God's Church, Christ's Fellowship of redeemed women and men, was not called into existence for *this*; it is not in the world for the purpose of providing congenial activities for its officials and a comfortable spiritual home for its members. The Church was born, and lives to-day, that it might act in the world of men as the body of the living Christ, expressing His mind, doing His work, carrying out His plans; its whole business and function is to absorb His thought and compassion and power and bring them to bear on all the complex range of human living—racial, international, industrial, personal; to apply, in a thousand different ways, the healing of the love of God to the open sores of our distracted world. One of the greatest sins, according to the teaching of Jesus, is religious selfishness. It corrupted the organized religion of

His day; and there is serious danger lest it corrupt ours also. He was at pains to make men see that the Church can only gain its life by losing it. Has not the time come for the Church to go back to Him and learn that lesson again?

IV

What, it may be asked, will such readjustment of values involve in practice? What would be the "note" of a Church that was truly "Christocentric"? Such a Church would be characterized by at least two marked features. On the one hand it would be a society of men and women completely and adventurously committed to living, and by God's available grace empowered to live, by Christ's law of love in all the dusty traffic of common affairs. Such Church members would, naturally, share the Church's faith, with access to the Church's source of life; but, in their Church membership, the emphasis would lie on the practical reality of their "every-day religion," and the chief test of their orthodoxy would be a Christ-like life and a Christ-like spirit. No longer would it be possible to regard as orthodox Christians those who, however "religious" on Sundays, during the rest of the week show themselves mean, dishonest, selfish, grasping and unsociable. "The demands we make as conditions of discipleship are just not those which Christ Himself demanded. He asked no man for intellectual orthodoxy; what He claimed was a sincere desire for truth and uncompromising moral loyalty. He did not ask for a faith about faith; He asked men to have faith in Him—to trust Him. Our tendency is to reverse His order. As doctrine has been piled high on doctrine, and explanation upon explanation, the stark, world-overturning simplicity of the original Gospel has been hidden."

It is not possible to exaggerate the significance of what

Jesus Himself said about the tests of true discipleship. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (St. Matt. vii, 20). "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (St. Matt. vii, 21). And in His stern description of the gathering of the nations before the Judgment Seat, the final test will be not orthodoxy of belief, but sheer Christ-like mercy and loving kindness in action: "Lord, when saw we thee an-hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (St. Matt. xxv, 37f.). These and similar laws of the Christian life, taken straight from the Gospels and the Epistles, might well from time to time be read out at Parochial Church Council meetings, as emphatic reminders of what clergy, council and people are actually set in that parish to do.

For the first great function of the Church is, surely, to act in the world as an "extension of the Incarnation"; to exhibit through the lives of her members the very beauty of Christ and the character of God; and to use her immense spiritual resources for this main purpose. If men cannot see in the Church of their day an actual demonstration of what Christianity is and can achieve for human character and human life, then the Church is missing the first point of her existence. It may be added that such a tremendous joint adventure in Christian living would create, as a by-product, that glowing fellowship, the lack of which makes unity and Reunion seem as idle dreams—real unity "will never be achieved by inertia, but only by action and passion." And, further, it would solve our problems of worship; such a corporate life would naturally find its expression in a public worship which would be real and beautiful, wholly sincere

and entirely relevant to life. Worship often is, and always will be, unreal and irrelevant unless it is an expression and an offering of a corporate Christianity lived out in the outside world; the true significance of each Holy Communion is missed unless it is regarded as the receiving of God's life for the doing of God's work, the bread eaten being veritably "the ration-bread of God's army," and the wine drunk "the stirrup-cup of God's saints."

The other fundamental task which confronts the Church in every age is that of *sharing its life* with the vast multitudes of the spiritually destitute. It is a common question, in these days of pressing international, social, and industrial problems, to ask "what the Churches are doing"; what contributions they have to offer for the solving of all these thorny difficulties. It cannot be stated too often or too emphatically that the Church's most effective contribution to the removal of present discontents is *to go on making Christians*: to bring God to the godless, life and peace and hope to those who are dead in trespasses and sins; with a restless love, to go on searching for the Father's lost sons and bring them home again, with joy, into His Kingdom. Then these returning prodigals, knowing now how to live as "friends of God and friends of one another," act as leaven in the world, as salt in the communities where their lives are set. These are the people who make human institutions workable; they live "better than the rules," do much more than obey the laws of the land, and indeed supply much of the power and the "lubrication" without which the general machinery of our human society would almost come to a standstill. To go on reclaiming men and women, thus providing this vital, healthy element in the body politic, is indeed "the primary business of the Church, without which the rest avails nothing"; and the gravest question for the Church to-day is not any-matter of ecclesiastical polity, however urgent it may seem, but the question whether or no she is at last going to throw her main energies

into the supremely vital task of evangelism. The scope and the call are world-wide. What the Church has of God is *owing* to those who need Him, whoever and wherever they are—profiteers or penniless, baronets or bus-men, from London to Peking, from the Baltic to the islands of the Pacific. From time to time in her long history, the Church has caught a fresh vision of this her primary duty and has girded herself anew to its discharge, with beneficent and abiding results. Is not such a return to her fundamental business due now? Let us be quite clear about it: if we isolate our religious life, if we fail in a Christ-like compassion towards the un-shepherded multitudes, if we seek to *have Christ without them*, we shall, ultimately, lose Him. He refuses to stay unless His friends may come in too.

He said, "Thou must shelter all things if thou shelter Me to-night." Quickly came the pulse of footsteps tracing down their only friend, In there trooped those other outcasts, blank-eyed, shiv'ring, without end;

These I welcomed, but when after flocks of preening fools came in Decked in shows, vain, cruel, shallow, I had barred their strident din

From the hearth where Christ was sitting with the mourners and the poor,

But He said, "Those be most needy, those least loved, set wide the door."¹

It must be confessed that at the present moment there are thousands inside the Church who barely give a thought to those outside, and simply do not want to be bothered with them; the "indifference" which is always asserted to be largely responsible for blocking the Kingdom's advance, is at least as characteristic of "Christians" in their attitude to non-Christians as it is of the latter towards the religion which Christians represent. There are, at last, signs of a change coming. There is unquestionably a growing number of Church members who are becoming keenly conscious of their supreme spiritual obligations. In fact it is not too much to say that the Christian Church in this country is

¹ Morning Mist.

more "evangelism-conscious" than it has been for many generations. A mass of literature is accumulating on the subject, the most noteworthy perhaps the report of a Church of England Commission entitled *Towards the Conversion of England*.¹ And all manner of evangelistic missions and methods, on the large scale and the small, are in process of being tried out. But, supposing that we are at length, by the grace of God, beginning to "want" those outside, how are we to be more effective in the work of winning them? How can we present Christianity to them in compelling and convincing fashion?

V

To attempt to answer adequately such a question in the course of a few pages is an impossible task; only a few bare suggestions can be briefly indicated. Let it be said, first of all, with emphasis, that whatever methods of propagating Christianity may be conceived or attempted, they are one and all doomed to failure unless they are backed, in the lives of the propagators, by Christian character and Christian conduct that bear some real resemblance to the character and conduct of Christ Himself. This is true both of individual Christian witness and of the organized efforts of Christian groups or Churches. The Church will never persuade the world to "try Christianity" until the world can see the Church gripped, permeated, dominated by the Gospel which it advocates; in the last resort life tells far more than argument. In the early days of Christianity it was the fellowship, the happy brotherhood, the radiant corporate life of the then Church that won the non-Christian. And it is futile for us to think we can win men if this spirit is absent. In the Church to-day it is easier

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to find an earnest preacher of the Gospel than a Church or congregation exhibiting a glowing, vigorous fellowship life such as arrests and attracts and converts. Indeed, in the event, it is by the life of the local congregation that the Gospel preached in their Church is gloriously vindicated or fatally discredited. "Most of the younger generation," says one who has unique opportunities of judging, "are outside the Churches not because they don't care, but because the Christian organizations are not Christian enough to meet their need." And there are those inside the Churches who feel this lack of fellowship even more acutely. Many will echo a remark once made to me: "A corporate life one *must* have; for apart from others I cannot really bear witness to Christ at all." And I recall a similar remark made to the late Dr. William Paton and quoted in one of his books, "I sometimes think that a great many of the younger people of to-day *have no sense that they belong to anything.*"

This matter of a strong, living, glowing, attractive *community life* in the Church is, obviously, of quite primary importance. Those outside the Church, conscious or semi-conscious of their real need, and threatened by forces of disintegration, are looking for the secret of community, and often enough looking in the wrong place. The Church professes to be able to meet this need; but patently without much hope of success unless and until there can be more of genuine, all-inclusive, infectious fellowship within her own borders. How shall it be attained? Not by any means and methods that are merely inward-looking; no group of Christ's followers can artificially form a "fellowship," and act as part of His Body, by merely "belonging" to the same local institution and meeting at stated times for corporate worship and edification. What is vital is collective action, collective witness, collective attacks on local evils, collective evangelism among the unconverted all round them. Like soldiers on service, it is only as they share the

hardships and perils, the defeats and the triumphs, of campaigning that they learn the true joys of Christian community life.

Such corporate witness may, and should, involve co-operative action on a basis much wider than that of a single Church or congregation, often combining in one "team" members of various Christian Communions. The need of a new spirit in industry, of far closer co-operation between employers and work-people, between manager and man at the conveyor-belt, is widely recognized at the present time. "At a time," says a recent front-page article in *The Times*,¹ "when full employment and other circumstances have weakened the old incentives it is particularly desirable, indeed essential, to have a spirit of team-work in industry. Without it there is little hope of achieving the increased production needed to maintain or improve the national standard of life."

Why not "teams of Christians" operating inside shops and factories and mines, not with the primary motive of increased production—that would be a by-product—but simply to demonstrate the possibility and the joy of what happens when "friends of God" bring the spirit of that friendship into all the mundane details of the ordinary daily job. Here indeed is the "Forgotten Factor" which can, and does, transform the most unlikely situations.²

Any mention of Christian fellowship and co-operation is of course bound to draw attention to the tragic, culpable, and paralysing divisions among Christians. A discussion of the problems of reunion would lie beyond the scope of this chapter; it would indeed need a whole book to itself; suffice it here to say just these things. That any of the sincere disciples of our Lord should not be in communion with one another is a fundamental anomaly for which all

¹ January 8, 1947.

² A play with that title, produced and performed by the "Moral Rearmament" Group, has recently been staged at the Westminster Theatre, playing to packed houses, with some remarkable results.

the Christian Communions must bear a share of the guilt; in a certain sense all are in a state of schism. Hopes of unity lie in the growing desire for it all over the world, especially among the younger Churches; in the newer vision of "unity by fullness," the separated Churches bringing their several treasures into the common stock; in the conscious possession of a common Gospel; and in the willingness of many Church leaders to seek and find the way, under God, for the provision of a universally recognized ministry. The main stumbling blocks are to be found partly in the difficulty of reconciling deep and conscientious differences which have kept Christians apart for long centuries; but most of all in the unconverted pride and complacency of the various ecclesiastical hierarchies, and in the apathy, ignorance, and contentment-with-things-as-they-are of the rank and file of the Churches. Nothing really will avail unless the Fire of God can descend afresh on His Church. Once on a visit to a factory I watched two pieces of very hard steel being welded together. In their previous cold state no combining was possible. Once they were both white-hot the welding was easy.

Secondly, we must resolutely hew down any barriers erected, from our side, by officialism, professionalism, aloofness and general want of human sympathy and human understanding. Many of those who are at present untouched by religion will continue to regard us with suspicion until, without a hint of patronage or condescension, we can frankly and sincerely mix with them as ordinary fellow human beings. In this non-human aloofness, which makes religion such an unlovely thing, we parsons are the worst offenders, though there are not a few of the pious and respectable laity who run us pretty close. The picture of a parson in the mind's eye of the robust pagan is usually "the unpropitious spectacle of a mild-mannered gentleman intent on rendering a group of docile people still more docile." He—the pagan—even thinks, often with just

cause, that we wear a special face to match our drab clothes and drab religion. I am reminded of the story of a minister who had to go by train to some place to fulfil a preaching engagement. His host went to meet him at the station; but, missing him, accosted a stranger. "Excuse me," he asked, "but are you a clergyman?" "Oh no," replied the stranger, eyeing him sadly, "it's my indigestion makes me look like this."

A third condition of any effective evangelism is that our presentation of the Gospel should be both intelligent and intelligible. Such presentation should include a sharp intellectual challenge to thinking people, especially those who are prone to take refuge in a permanently suspended judgment where religious issues are concerned. We need to see very clearly what it is that we are pressing upon our contemporaries, and what precisely we are asking them to do. We are proposing to them, not to repeat a formula or adopt a point of view or join an organization, but to *share a life*; and of that life we must ourselves be very clear as to its sources, nature and implications, if we are to make it intelligible to and available for our generation. It is not enough to proffer to them, without variation or adequate explanation, descriptions and definitions of the Christian faith as the Church has always held it, however familiar and precious such formulæ may be to ourselves. It is vital to recognize the real distinction between truth itself and the verbal vehicles in which, at any given time, men attempt to convey it. To attach to particular words and phrases a dread and final sanctity is to begin a descent into the dreary region of shibboleths and cant and magic. Jesus not only left nothing in writing. He even seemed to avoid giving His disciples final verbal statements which they might erect into formulæ. He gave them not words but Himself; His legacy to men of all time was a Spirit and a Life. So, if we would win men, we cannot evade the task of trying to see afresh for ourselves, and so for them, what it really means

to speak of faith in God, of a life in Christ, of a divine Spirit-giving, Spirit-guided fellowship linking men together into a unity transcending all the common unities of human experience. Such a task will demand of us that, open-eyed and unafraid, we put truth before dogma; that, ceasing to regard our creeds as shelters to hide in, we venture forth to bring faith and life, yea, Christ Himself, to the testing of the keenest contemporary thought and experience.

No other course is possible for those who have learnt that Truth is living, not dead, is present and future as well as past, and who, consequently, refuse to "turn life into a scheme of orthodoxy." The new knowledge of science, of history, is penetrating everywhere, and the day has come for the Church to disentangle from her essential message what Dr. Inge calls the "indigestible slabs of obsolete science" which have been embedded in it from time immemorial.

It is, in any case, growing clear that there can never be any successful evangelism without such sincere attempts to relate intelligibly the main contents of the Christian message to the living needs of to-day. There is no question of a "new Gospel"; but, like the householder who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old, an evangelizing Church must needs ascertain, and make available, those essential elements in Christianity which are specially calculated to meet the needs of the world of its day; above all, we would proffer to men not a museum religion, dissected, analysed, defined and dead, but a living Jesus Christ, who has a thousand fresh ways of relating Himself to succeeding generations. We would persuade men to look to Christ—Christ living, dying, risen—to see what God is like, what men may be, how evil may be overthrown, whence history began and towards what it is moving. We would go to men with Christ's glorious tidings of a God who is alive and near, free to act and ready to respond, not remote

and aloof and negligible; of a forgiveness real and immediate, of a new standard for human living and a power to attain it, of a new world fellowship of love and peace, of the Kingdom of God as the final reality, the *summum bonum*, the attainable goal, for this life and the life to come.

Now all this involves far more than an evangelistic individualism which seeks to snatch a few from a doomed world, as brands from the burning. It means we may go to men with tidings of redemption not simply for their own souls, but for their whole environment—their bodies and the physical conditions of their lives—their circle of relationships, their work, their play, their civic and political interests, the nearer and the larger world in which they live. And it involves, as we have already seen, not only an individual converting an individual, but collective action on the part of Christian communities. With such a message, put intelligibly, sympathetically, and with a combination of humility and certainty, we can at least get a hearing from our contemporaries. There is a way into the heart and mind of every generation; and the way into the heart of ours is to show that there is that in our religion which can successfully grapple with social and economic evils and point to the true way of social renewal. Men give some heed to Christ when they begin to see that His message insists on the absolute sacredness of human personality and the binding obligation of the law of love, and that He can actually enable men to act on these principles; and they will pay more attention to the Church when they see her trying to think out the kind of social, industrial and international order which these postulates demand, and inculcating upon her members the duty of living accordingly.¹ And, in point of fact, this Gospel "works." When men really discover that Christ is not a sort of cold, ecclesiastical lay figure invented by the Churches, but is, in fact, alive and person-

¹ Cf. Chapter III.

ally accessible, and is actually concerned with their hopes and fears, their work, their house, their family, their town and their nation, then they, many of them, turn Christian. Many of the more recent, corporate evangelistic efforts have been carried out on these lines; such as the "Religion and Life Weeks," held in large numbers of towns and villages during the past few years. There has also taken place of recent years a striking and welcome revival of religious drama; a method of presenting religious truth which has been too long left in desuetude. Such plays as T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, performed in Canterbury Cathedral, and more recently Miss Dorothy Sayers' *The Just Vengeance*, performed in Lichfield Cathedral, are conspicuous and successful examples. In this connection mention should also be made of the deep impression made on the minds of countless listeners by Miss Sayers' well-known and oft-heard broadcast play *The Man Born to be King*.

Such evangelistic enterprises and dramatic performances where there has been a considered and successful attempt to make an effective impact on the community as well as to convert individuals, have given a striking indication of what may be achieved when, with all its strength, and without reserve, with knowledge and enthusiasm and burning hope, the Church proclaims Jesus to the people of this land.

"Behold, I make all things new." Such renewal, on a large scale, may be nearer than we think. There is a cloud like a man's hand on the horizon, with the promise of abundance of rain. The reservoirs of God are opening, and whithersoever the River cometh there is a springing of fresh life. Let us gird ourselves to dig the channels. With a new faith in God, with deep penitence for the past and high resolve for the future, the Church, renewed and reunited, may yet be the bringer of Christ to this stricken world. But not without tremendous cost. It is no light thing to reassert the supremacy of Jesus. It will mean

daring and humility and adventure and sacrifice, and what the world would probably call failure; for, as an acute thinker has pointed out, always and everywhere "the Church tends to be controlled by the established and the practical; and to these the spirit of Jesus cannot be congenial."¹ And on every individual Christian this adventure will make a great demand. It will mean, as this book has tried to show, a life in every detail—family, business, money, pleasure, all personal relationships, all hopes and ambitions—ordered with direct reference to what Jesus Christ wants. It will mean also—and this will be the inspiration for our new way of living—a real experience of the companionship of Jesus, of friendship with the living God. If we can do it—you and I and all who care; if all who are looking for the Kingdom can get together and act together on the basis of "Christ first, whatever it may cost"—then things will happen.

Some of these happenings we in this generation may yet see; more of them will appear to our children and children's children. So—on to the adventure, with faith and confidence, with hope and courage. With God, it is always "better further on." We may well take to ourselves the word of hope and cheer addressed, more than two thousand years ago, by one of God's servants to a people waiting and longing for redemption. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isaiah xxxv, 3-6).

Grant, O God, that we may walk as Jesus walked; grant

¹ Glover, *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, p. 163.

that what the Spirit was in Him, such He may also be in us; grant that our lives may be re-fashioned after the pattern of His Life; grant that we may do to-day, here, on earth, what Jesus would have done, and in the way He would have done it. Amen.

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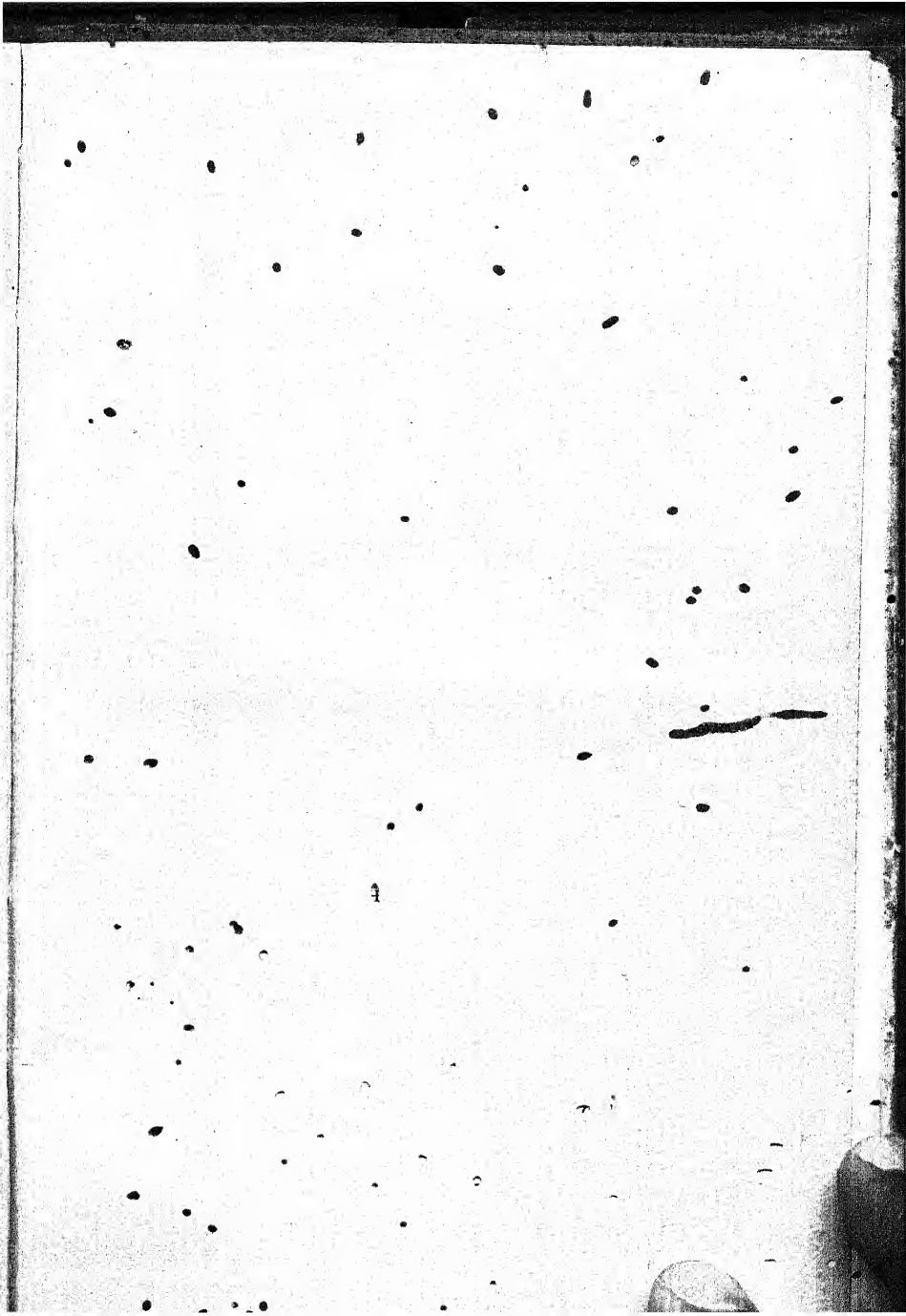
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